Legislative Assembly Office

1999 Annual Report

& 1999 Annual Report of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Alberta Branch

100-03964/

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The *Legislative Assembly Office* (LAO) is a nonpartisan organization that provides support to the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

March 13, 2000

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

I am very pleased to submit the 11th annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office as required by Standing Order 109, for the calendar year ended December 31, 1999. This report also includes the third annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

As Speaker, it has been my pleasure to lead the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office for almost three years. This group of dedicated men and women continues to improve upon Alberta's well established reputation for quality service among our Commonwealth counterparts. They provide excellent support to the Assembly both in the Chamber and outside it. They have also served this Assembly and this province well every time they are called upon to host visiting parliamentarians or co-ordinate Assembly events. In 1999 they responded effectively on four noteworthy occasions: the Islam ceremony of Eid Al-Adha in March, the first annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament in April, and in December the unveiling of Famous Five portraits and Christmas celebrations at the Legislature.

I thank members and staff who have presented papers or otherwise very ably represented our province at various interparliamentary conferences. I am grateful to all MLAs for supporting the Legislative Assembly Office and the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Kowalski, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

March 13, 2000

To the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

I am honoured to present to you the 11th annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office and the third annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. These reports highlight the numerous projects, conferences, and events that MLAs and Legislative Assembly Office staff were involved in throughout the year and recognize the high quality of support that staff provided to the Assembly day by day. I am also pleased to include for the first time the audited financial statements for the operation of the Legislative Assembly Office. These statements are for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

In 1999 Legislative Assembly Office staff continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment, flexibility, and teamwork in providing service to the Members of the Legislative Assembly and to the public. I am pleased to work with such a dynamic group of men and women.

Once again Alberta had a strong presence at national and international conferences and in other interparliamentary settings. The opportunities for professional development and education offered through these gatherings has proven beneficial to the members and staff who participated in them and to the people they serve.

Respectfully submitted,

W.J. David McNeil
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Legislative Assembly Office 2

Legislative Assembly Office 4

Purpose Statement and Goals 4

The Year in Review
W.J. David McNeil, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly 6

House Services 10

House and Committee Services
Louise J. Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees 11

Legal Services
Robert Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Shannon Dean, Parliamentary Counsel 14

Ceremonial and Security Services
Brian Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms 15

Information, Reference, and Co-ordination Services:
Legislature Library
Sandra E. Perry, Legislature Librarian 18

Public Education and Reporting Services: Public Information Branch
Gary Garrison, Director 22

Administrative/Information Systems Services
Bill Gano, Director and Senior Financial Officer 28

Financial Management and Administrative Services
Jacqueline Breault, Manager 32

Human Resource Services
Cheryl Scarlett, Director 38

Special Events 42

Former Members of the Legislative Assembly 44

1997-98 Financial Statements 46

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Alberta Branch 62

Interparliamentary Relations 80

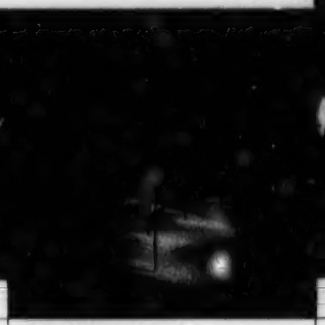
Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament

Legislative Assembly Office

1999 Annual Report

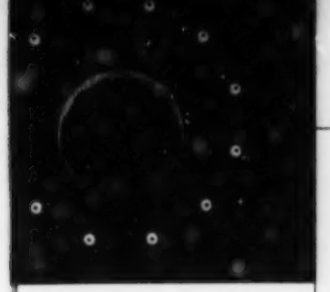
Page speech competition winner Daniel Novak (left)

Eid Al-Adha



Christmas lights on the grounds

The University of Alberta Mixed Chorus at the annual Christmas Light-up



An Introduction

The Legislative Assembly Office: In Service to Alberta's Parliament

The origins of the Legislative Assembly Office of Alberta can be traced to the 14th century in England, when Parliament elected the first Speaker and appointed the first Clerk. Today the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is the head of the office, and the Clerk is the Speaker's deputy. The Legislative Assembly Act of 1983 made the office's current name official.

The most common misconception about the Legislative Assembly Office is that it is a branch of the government and that its staff are government employees. However, in the parliamentary system the government is the executive branch and is responsible for applying and enforcing laws; the Legislative Assembly is the legislative branch and is responsible for establishing those laws. The Legislative Assembly Office provides various types of support to the entire Assembly, including MLAs of opposition and government parties alike.

Although the office is sometimes called the Speaker's department, it is not a government department. The Speaker does not belong to the cabinet and cannot be asked questions during Oral Question Period or participate in the Assembly's debates. The Speaker does have administrative authority and responsibility similar to that of the ministers of government departments; the Clerk is the Speaker's chief administrative deputy and has authority and responsibility similar to that of a deputy minister.

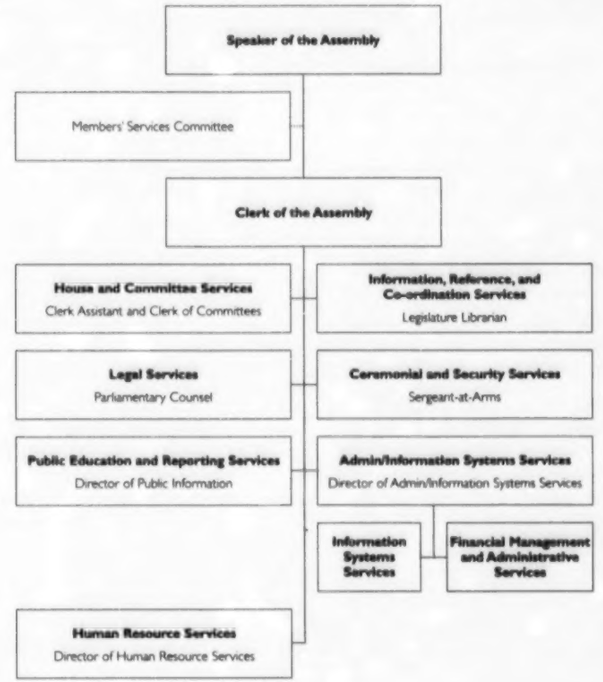
The Speaker has two distinct but related roles. In the Assembly the Speaker maintains order and ensures that MLAs conduct their business according to the Standing Orders of the Assembly. Administratively, the Speaker is responsible for the Assembly's records and for providing services to MLAs and the public. The latter include financial administration, purchasing, human resources, office automation assistance, public education, and the library.

The Legislative Assembly Office as a whole has the same two procedural and administrative roles. This is a unique characteristic of the office and is evident throughout the office, particularly during session, when the normal duties, work hours, and office locations of many staff change significantly.

The office's annual budget as well as statutory provisions for financial and human resource administration are under the purview of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services. An all-party committee of the Assembly, the Members' Services Committee also regulates constituency office support and members' pay, allowances, benefits, and group insurance plans, all of which the office administers. Traditionally, the Speaker chairs the Members' Services Committee.

Each party grouping of elected members, or caucus, is a branch of the Legislative Assembly Office. Although technically the Speaker has authority over the administration of each caucus office, for obvious reasons these branches operate with considerable autonomy. The caucus branches are therefore not part of this report; it includes only branches of the office under the Speaker's full control. However, since the caucuses receive financial, administrative, and human resource services as well as other support from other branches of the office, this report does comment on those services. In addition, the office's consolidated budget estimates and audited financial statements, which appear at the end of this report, include caucus finances.

Legislative Assembly Office



Purpose Statement

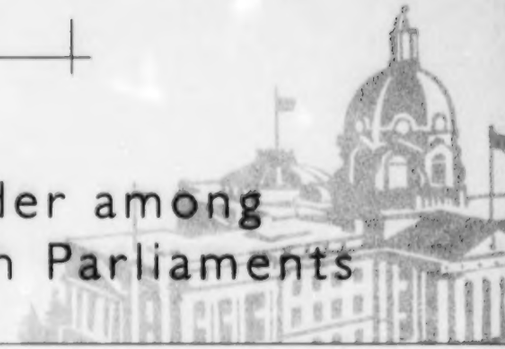
Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly will:

1. Support the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of office.
2. Support members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta.
3. Record the proceedings and maintain the records of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Inform and educate the public on behalf of members and the institution of parliament.
5. Support the Assembly in protecting its institutions and privileges.
6. Support the exchange of information and ideas among Legislatures.
7. Support the Officers of the Legislature as required.

Goals of the Legislative Assembly Office 1999-2000

1. Assist the Speaker in fulfilling the duties of office.
2. Meet and exceed the service expectations of Members.
3. Assist Members in carrying out their roles as legislators within the parliamentary system in Alberta.
4. Respond to increased demands for technology related services from Members, staff, and the public.
5. Increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs.
6. Continue to maintain the separation of powers among the Legislative Assembly, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
7. Ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office provides quality services in an increasingly competitive environment.
8. Provide leadership in fostering increasing interparliamentary co-operation through participation in national and international parliamentary forums and exchange programs.
9. Promote the products, services, and achievements of the Legislative Assembly Office to members, staff, and the public.
10. Foster and recognize leadership and teamwork within the Legislative Assembly Office.
11. Ensure the continuing development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Legislative Assembly Office workforce.
12. Promote the involvement of employees in the ongoing development of the Legislative Assembly Office.

Canada Day 1999 was just the second time the public have been allowed onto the floor of the Chamber.



The Year In Review: Alberta a Leader among Commonwealth Parliaments

W.J. David McNeil, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Thanks to the staff's commitment to professionalism and collaboration, the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) met or exceeded its goals for 1999. Every branch and individual member of the staff made significant contributions, and all of them deserve to be congratulated for this achievement. The Assembly collectively and members individually made new and often unexpected demands for services in addition to those traditionally provided, which challenged the LAO to achieve new milestones in the provision of services. The LAO continued to be a leader among the parliamentary support organizations of the Commonwealth in terms of service excellence, expertise, and innovation, and that leadership was evident in the role LAO staff played in interparliamentary associations in 1999.

Increased sessional workload

The Assembly sat 62 days in 1999, one day fewer than 1998. The number of hours increased marginally, from 337 to 346. On December 8 the Assembly sat from 8 p.m. until 4:38 a.m. the next day, the third longest sitting in history. However, the length of the sittings alone does not give a true picture of the significantly increased pressure on Table Officers and House support staff. The number of tablings in 1999 was nearly double that of 1997 and 47 percent higher than in 1998. Written questions increased 74 percent from 1998, and the number of motions for returns was triple that of the previous year. As well, Parliamentary Counsel dealt with an unusually large number of amendments to bills. Nevertheless, personnel met all these challenges effectively. In the fall sittings three new people began training as Table Officers to provide additional support, namely the two committee clerks and a procedural clerk. When the bills and journals clerk resigned in December, plans were made to replace her with one full-time person and a second sessional person to help with the increased workload.

Other direct support for the work of the Assembly involved timely and accurate transcripts of the House and its committees by *Hansard* staff, the index of *Hansard*, ongoing committee administration from committee clerks, Assembly sessional publications subscriptions, responding to thousands of public requests for information about the Assembly, Visitor Services' and security's assistance with members' guests and other visitors to the Chamber, and ready access to authoritative research information from the Legislature Library. All of these areas made major contributions to the smooth and effective operation of the Assembly and enabled the elected members to perform their duties without worrying unduly about this essential support.

The newly created position of digital services librarian significantly increased the Library's ability to access information electronically and to provide it to members and other clients more quickly using the latest computer technology. Other library initiatives included a new information brochure, planning for a new web-based catalogue interface, and the first open house and tea, during which MLAs and other users were able to get an introduction to service enhancements as well as to get better acquainted with the staff. In August Library staff received an emergency lesson in document preservation when renovation work on the Legislature Building caused water damage to materials in one of the library's storage vaults. For several

weeks all available staff were dedicated to the preservation work, and by year's end the damaged documents were ready for reshelving.

Constituency staff information sessions

Other types of LAO support for the Assembly and its members may not be evident to the public, but they are just as important to the work of our parliamentary system. These include finance, administration, freedom of information requests, legal services, human resources assistance, computer systems, public education, and special events. To ensure that constituency office staff know the people involved and how to access these various services, staff of Information Systems Services (ISS), Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS), and Human Resource Services (HRS) conducted administrative information seminars in Calgary and Edmonton in the spring. A third seminar in December involved staff from all other branches. These seminars were very well received, and plans have been made to schedule at least one such event each year.

The most talked about concern at the end of the year, of course, was the potential impact of the year 2000 on computers. ISS staff began preparations several years ago so all hardware and software would continue to function smoothly once January 2000 arrived. This included replacing old hardware and upgrading or patching numerous programs to ensure everything would function in the new year. Thanks to good planning and the expertise and dedication of the staff, the new year arrived without a hitch. ISS also continued to provide high quality support to all LAO system users throughout the year by servicing equipment, upgrading software, and responding to nearly 2,000 calls to the help desk.

Web site development

A major initiative spearheaded by ISS in 1999 was the development of the Assembly's web site and the creation of the new Intranet site, *Our House*, for MLAs and staff. Early in the year bills and amendments were published on the external Internet page after an internal test in 1998 on the new searchable database containing these materials. In the spring a web site committee of staff representing all LAO branches was struck and given the task of utilizing web site capability as a major communication tool both within the LAO and with the public. By the end of the year the Intranet page was up and running. It includes directories of staff for each branch, Standing Orders, a daily news service, an outline of services provided by each branch and how to access them, forms for expense claims and time sheets, and a variety of other features. By year's end the committee had turned its attention to further developing and refining the contents and appearance of the Internet site.

In collaboration with ISS, the staff of FMAS put together budget proposal packages for the Members' Services Committee's consideration in December. ISS staff provided technical support to the process, and FMAS staff used the financial information from branch managers to create a document that the committee could readily understand. Thanks to their expertise and diligence the budget process went smoothly, and the estimates were approved quickly.

FMAS also provided high quality support in administration and finance, ensuring that constituency leases were maintained, expense claims and invoices were paid promptly, financial information reports were accurate and timely, and a variety of related services were provided. Staff implemented a number of electronic commerce applications, ensured LAO and MLA telecommunications technology was appropriate and up to date, and updated stationery and related materials to reflect the implementation of a new telephone area code for areas north of Red Deer. FMAS also worked closely with Auditor General staff to produce financial statements for the Legislative Assembly.

HRS administered numerous changes to benefits packages for employees and MLAs and implemented the 2.44 percent increase in MLA remuneration authorized by the Members' Services Committee. Branch staff co-ordinated 14 competitions in 1999, participated in 143 selection interviews, and facilitated the hiring of 34 new staff. The branch provided reliable and timely payroll support as well as ongoing assistance in all human resource areas. As part of its responsibility for workplace wellness, HRS led the continued work of the ergonomics committee, which includes representatives from all LAO branches. The committee developed and implemented an ergonomic education program, and in 1999 presentations were made to 118 constituency and LAO employees and on-site assessments were conducted for 31 individuals in order to improve their workstations. HRS also played a role in the third annual staff recognition dinner in December. An interbranch committee co-ordinated this event, at which the Speaker thanked all staff for their support and recognized individuals who had served the LAO for five, 10, 15, and 20 years.

Public education and special events

Several branches were involved in outreach activities designed to educate the public about the legislative process. One initiative designed to help distinguish between the Legislative Assembly and the executive (the Government), was the creation of a new visual identifier for the Assembly. It is a simple drawing of Alberta's Mace, and this Mace was used on various documents throughout the year. In the spring a new fax cover sheet for all LAO branches was created using this image. This 1999 annual report is the first annual report to incorporate the image.

Overall visitor numbers were up 16 percent over 1998. Most of this increase occurred during the Christmas season when the Legislature Building was open evenings so that people who came to see the lights on the grounds could hear choirs performing in the Rotunda. More than 15,000 visitors attended Christmas events. As well, for the second time the public was invited onto the floor of the Chamber on Canada Day. Staff from several areas of the LAO assisted with this event, which over 6,000 visitors attended. Other LAO-supported special events which drew the public into the building and onto the grounds were the unveiling of the Famous Five portraits on the fifth floor, the Klondike Days breakfast, Halloween-o-rama, the annual craft sale, and the regional and national heritage fairs in the pedway. As well, Visitor Services offered several teacher workshops at Edmonton area schools and continued to develop the School-at-the-Legislature program in co-operation with the Alberta Museums Association.

The LAO continued to be active in interparliamentary relations in 1999. Alberta hosted the annual National Legislative Visitor Services Conference in June. The Senior Parliamentary Counsel and Director of Public Information served on the executive of the Canadian associations of parliamentary counsel and *Hansard* respectively. Staff published articles in two parliamentary publications, one on the changes to MLA remuneration and another on Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament. There was also a regular report from Alberta in the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*. Staff from several areas participated in national and international conferences, at which some made presentations to share their Alberta experience.

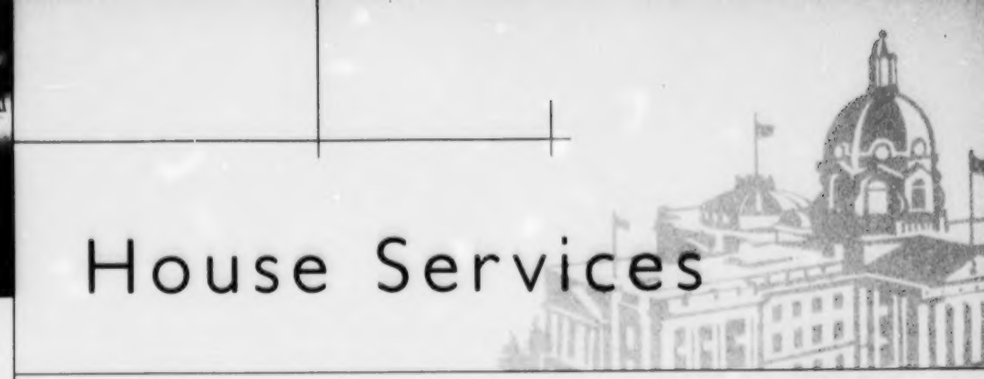
Interbranch collaboration contributed to the success of the LAO in numerous ways in 1999, some of which are mentioned above. Another one was the Speaker's Cup golf tournament in September, in which 140 MLAs, former MLAs, staff, and friends of the LAO participated and an additional 60 attended the closing dinner. Staff from several areas worked on this event to ensure its success. Charitable contributions were made to the Kids Kottage Foundation, the Oilers Alumni Charities, and the Winnifred Stewart Foundation.

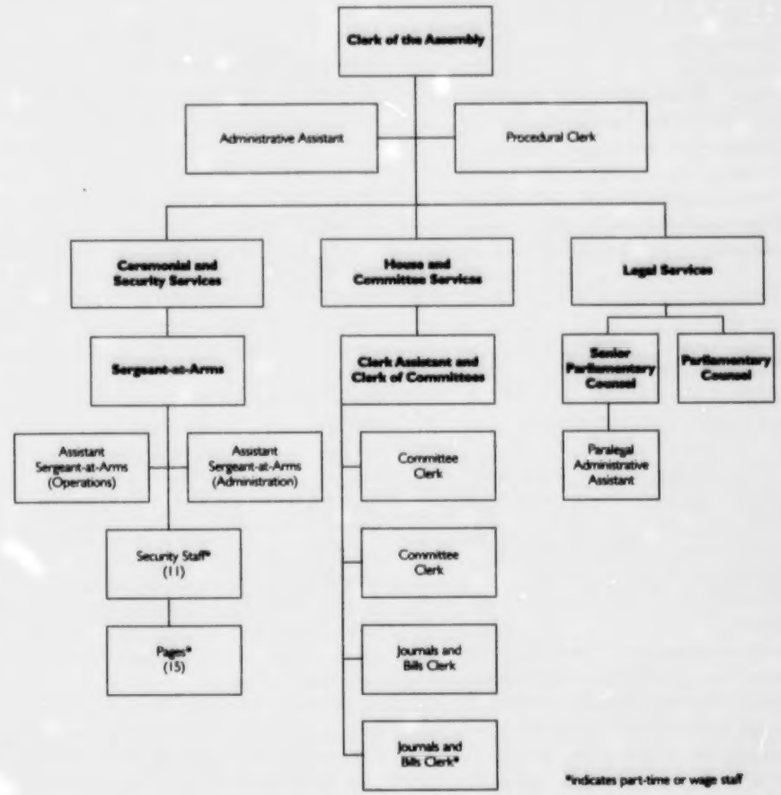
Youth Parliament

One major interbranch project that deserves special mention is the creation of Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament, which received recognition and praise from MLAs, the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion which sponsored the project, all the participants, and other jurisdictions across Canada. Eighty-three grade 10 students representing each constituency participated in briefing sessions from cabinet ministers, opposition MLAs, and other private members as well as media representatives. Participants met in caucus groups to plan strategies and prepare for a day of session. The full day of session was broadcast live on Access television. Fifteen grade 10 teachers from across Alberta participated in a parallel program. By year's end preparations were well under way to conduct the second edition of this youth parliament in April 2000.

On opening day it is traditional for members and guests to gather in the Rotunda following the Speech from the Throne.

House Services





House and Committee Services

Louise J. Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees

Function Statement

- Provides procedural advice to the Speaker and members of the Assembly
- Manages support services to legislative committees
- Maintains Assembly records
- Manages production of Assembly documents

In 1999 House and Committee Services (HCS) provided procedural and administrative support during 62 sitting days and 32 standing and special committee meetings. During the fall sittings several branch staff received Table Officer training. Throughout the year the branch increased public access to Assembly documents by expanding the number of sessional documents available on the web site. HCS staff also participated in a number of events both within the LAO and in other parts of the country.

To mark the designation of 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons, the Central Lions' Seniors' Choir led members in singing *O Canada* when the third session of the 24th Legislature officially opened on Tuesday, February 16, for the Speech from the Throne. On March 11 Provincial Treasurer Stockwell Day tabled the province's budget. The 49-day spring sittings adjourned on May 18.

On November 15 Pamela Paul, MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs, resigned from the Liberal caucus to sit as an independent. The Assembly reconvened on November 17 and adjourned December 8. On December 7 the third longest evening sitting in Alberta history occurred when the House sat from 8 p.m. until 4:38 a.m. the next morning.

On December 9 His Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor H.A. "Bud" Olson announced he would be stepping down as Alberta's 14th Lieutenant Governor after three and a half years. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appointed Mrs. Lois E. Hole as His Honour's successor. Her installation as Alberta's second female Lieutenant Governor was scheduled for February 10, 2000.

Three of the 29 private members' public bills introduced in 1999 received Royal Assent, bringing to 19 the number of private members' public bills that have received Royal Assent since the parliamentary reforms of 1993. House activity increased in many areas over previous years. The number of motions for returns and petitions presented to the Assembly increased significantly. To provide timely public access to sessional documents, with the help of Information Systems Services (ISS) the branch made the status of bills and the complete text of bills and amendments available on the Assembly's Internet site. Internet users also have access to other House documents, including Order Papers, Votes and Proceedings, written questions, motions for returns, and minutes of committee meetings.

During the fall sittings the committee clerks and procedural clerk began training to learn the various tasks performed by the Table Officers while the House is in session. This will provide valuable backup should the Clerk Assistant be called away. In addition, with the resignation of the journals and bills clerk in December, plans were made to hire a full-time person and a second sessional person to help with the increased workload.

Throughout the year HCS staff provided administrative and procedural support for 32 meetings of standing and special standing committees of the Assembly. The title of administrative assistants to committees was changed to committee clerks to better reflect the role and responsibilities of these individuals. Active standing committees in 1999 included the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (14 meetings), the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund (3 meetings), Legislative Offices (5 meetings), Private Bills (5 meetings), and the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services (3 meetings). The Select Special Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Review Committee completed its mandate with two meetings in 1999.

During the spring the Committee of Supply established nine committees to review government department estimates. Five designated supply subcommittees were appointed to review estimates of specific departments designated by the Official Opposition; an additional four subcommittees of supply were appointed to review the estimates of other departments.

In the fall the Assembly changed the membership of several standing committees, including the appointment of a new chair for the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The committee's annual public meetings with Albertans on the investment activities and results of the heritage fund needed to meet its legislative requirements were postponed to March 2000.

The branch continued its practice of cooperating with other jurisdictions by responding to many surveys and questionnaires on Assembly and committee procedures, actively participating in relevant associations, and attending professional development seminars and conferences. The Clerk Assistant continued to provide administrative support to the Alberta section of the America Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) and the education committee of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table. Alberta APF members and the Clerk Assistant attended the International Plenary Session of the APF in Ontario.

Alberta's committee clerks attended the first Special Conference on Parliamentary Committees in Ottawa in September. The Alberta representatives presented two papers, one titled Administrative Issues: Organizing Committee Travel and Procedural Handbooks, and the other, Review of the Appointment of Officers.

The Clerk Assistant presented the jurisdictional report at the Clerks-at-the-Table professional development seminar in August. Branch staff also attended the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference and the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference.

HCS staff was actively involved, either as volunteers or representatives, in a number of joint projects internally, including the Assembly's web committee, the staff recognition dinner, the Speaker's Cup, and the United Way campaign.

Comparative Statistics

		1999 (Third Session 24th Legislature)	1998 (Second Session 24th Legislature)
Sitting Days (hours)	Spring	49 (177)	49 (177)
	Fall	13 (51)	14 (51)
Evening Sittings (hours)	Spring	36 (85)	36 (76)
	Fall	10 (33)	11 (33)
Government Bills	Introduced	46	50
	Received Royal Assent	43	44
Private Bills	Introduced	3	4
	Received Royal Assent	2	4
Private Members' Public Bills	Introduced	29	32
	Received Royal Assent	3	4
Government Motions	Debated	26	39
	Agreed to	24	38
	Withdrawn (closure motion not moved)	2	1
Private Members' Motions	Placed on Order Paper	94	97
	Agreed to	8	10
	Defeated	7	6
	Withdrawn	4	1
Written Questions	Placed on Order Paper	99	57
	Accepted	74	43
	Rejected	16	11
Motions for Returns	Placed on Order Paper	156	50
	Accepted	51	23
	Rejected	95	21
Committee of Supply (days)	Main Estimates	20	20
	Heritage Savings Trust Fund	0	0
	Capital Fund	0	0
	Lottery Fund	2	3
	Supplementary	4	5
Designated Supply Subcommittees (hours) (1999: Education, Environmental Protection, Family and Social Services, Health, Municipal Affairs)		17.82	13.70
Tablings	Required by Statute	146	176
	Voluntary Tablings	1,211	849
	Total	1,357	1,025
Petitions (excluding Private Bills)	Presented	268	120
	Read and Received	89	80
Recognitions		199	139
Members' Statements		87	93
Ministerial Statements		23	22
Pages Published	Votes and Proceedings	589	520
	Order Paper	1,086	882

Legal Services

Robert Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel / Shannon Dean, Parliamentary Counsel

Function Statement

- Provides legal and procedural advice to the Speaker, members of the Assembly, committees of the Assembly, caucuses, and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office
- Drafts private members' public bills, amendments, and written questions
- Provides legal services to the Chief Electoral Officer

Although the House sat one less day in 1999 than the previous year, the demand for Parliamentary Counsel's services rose significantly. Outside the House, Counsel provided ongoing procedural and legal advice to members and staff and supported several LAO events and initiatives. As well, both Counsel presented papers at parliamentary conferences.

In terms of House business Parliamentary Counsel reviewed and approved an unusually large number of amendments to bills during the spring and fall sittings. As well, Counsel and the Clerk Assistant reviewed more than 250 written questions and motions for returns, more than double the number submitted in 1998.

Since reforms to Standing Orders in 1993, private members' public bills had been debated for up to an hour on Tuesdays and the entire afternoon on Wednesdays. In 1999, however, when consideration of Written Questions and Motions for Returns occasionally took up the entire afternoon on Wednesdays, time for private members' public bills was significantly less. However, three private members' public bills did receive Royal Assent in 1999: Bill 202, *Farming Practices Protection Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*; Bill 208, *Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act*; and Bill 210, *Charitable Donation of Food Act*.

Parliamentary Counsel provided support to the Standing Committee on Private Bills by working with petitioners, coordinating the process for bringing these bills to the committee, and providing legal advice. This year three private bills were referred to the committee. The committee recommended two of these, which eventually received Royal Assent; the petitioners withdrew the other bill in the fall.

There were no personnel changes in the office this year. The administrative assistant to Parliamentary Counsel supported the Standing Committee on Private Bills and assisted not only with the day-to-day operations of the office and the Private Bills Committee but also responded to many inquiries. A first year University of Alberta law student assisted in the office during the summer.

Counsel updated the document How to Petition the Alberta Legislature to Pass a Private Bill in order to provide further information to petitioners. They also prepared Guidelines for Submitting Petitions to the Legislative Assembly. Both documents were made available on the Assembly's web site.

Counsel lent their support to several Assembly events and ceremonies held throughout the year. They were pleased to assist the youth caucuses during the first annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament in April and to take part in the seminar for constituency offices held in December. Counsel also supported the Speaker at ceremonies commemorating Remembrance Day, the Islam ceremony Eid Al-Adha, and the unveiling of the Famous Five portraits in the Legislature.

The branch's continued collaboration with

other managers and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) ensured that members, their staff, and caucuses received reliable and timely advice. Counsel worked with other divisions of the LAO on leases, contracts, and other legal agreements. And, continuing a trend of recent years, Counsel devoted considerable attention to issues arising from inquiries by officers of the Legislature, particularly those relating to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Both Counsel also continued to respond to numerous requests from individuals on matters concerning parliamentary procedure and law.

To foster professional development and communication with other Commonwealth jurisdictions, the branch participated in three conferences in August. Both Counsel attended the Association of Parliamentary Counsel of Canada's annual conference in Toronto and made a presentation concerning amendments at committee stage. At that conference Rob Reynolds was elected president of the association. Shannon Dean attended the Clerks-at-the-Table conference in Saskatchewan, where she presented a paper examining the impact of freedom of information legislation on legislative assemblies.

A delegation of East African lawyers visited the Legislative Assembly as part of the Canadian Bar Association national conference in Edmonton, which the Senior Counsel attended. Counsel organized a seminar for their East African counterparts with the Clerk and Legislative Counsel to discuss parliamentary procedure, law, and the drafting of legislation.

Ceremonial and Security Services

Brian Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms

Function Statement

- Provides security services to the Legislative Assembly
- Provides page and messenger services to the Assembly during its sittings
- Plans and executes ceremonial functions

The biggest change for Ceremonial and Security Services (CSS) in 1999 was the retirement of the longtime Associate Sergeant-at-Arms and the subsequent appointment of two Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms. Also of note was the role the branch played in the co-ordination of the first Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament held in the Legislature Chamber in the spring. Throughout the year CSS continued to make security arrangements for the Legislature Chamber, precincts, and constituency offices, participate in several ceremonial events, and provide communications and protocol assistance to other branches of the Assembly.

As part of its ongoing responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Speaker, members, visitors, and staff, CSS made improvements to security arrangements in the galleries and precincts. Branch staff provided security coverage during 62 sitting days, 46 evening sittings, and 27 committee meetings. With the assistance of visitor services, the branch spearheaded an initiative to draw visitors into the galleries during evening sittings. This resulted in a number of army and air cadet units and numerous cub, scout, and guide troops touring the Legislature Building during evening hours.

CSS visited 16 constituency offices around the province to review security arrangements. In addition, the branch was actively involved in a number of security concerns affecting MLAs and constituency office staff and acted as a liaison with various police and public security services to ensure the interests of the members and constituency office staff affected were met. There were four thefts or break-ins at constituency offices during 1999, and three new constituency alarm systems were installed. Many constituency office staff were given briefings at two meetings, one involving constituency office staff of Official Opposition MLAs, the other as part of an LAO information seminar for constituency office employees.

The most significant change in the branch this year was the retirement of Associate Sergeant-at-Arms Allen Gowler in June and the subsequent appointment of Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms Edgar Richard and William Semple in November. Mr. Gowler provided 18 years of loyal and dedicated service to the Assembly after a 26-year career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Edmonton Police Service. In other staff changes, the head page concluded her service with the Legislative Assembly and became a page for the House of Commons. Prior to the fall sittings two pages were promoted to head page and Speaker's page respectively. The Sergeant-at-Arms was involved in the interview and selection process for new pages.

CSS worked with a number of model parliaments, including the Alberta Debate and Speech Association, the University of Alberta Model Parliament, the Forum for Young Albertans, and the Francophonie Jeunesse de l'Alberta and was heavily involved in the organization of Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament.

The branch co-ordinated the page development program, which included a weekly professional development seminar and a compulsory speech competition sponsored by TransAlta corporation. All pages delivered short prepared speeches on a topic drawn from the 44th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Wellington, New Zealand: How can the Commonwealth assist in the protection and development of national and regional cultures in the face of increasingly globalized communications and entertainment? The winner, Daniel Novak, was given the unanimous consent of the Assembly to deliver his award-winning speech to MLAs in the House during an afternoon sitting.

CSS planned and executed a number of ceremonial events including the laying up of the 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force standard, the presentation of Alberta flags and ceremonies to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Medicine Hat Police Service, the Royal Canadian Legion presentation of poppies, the annual Remembrance Day service, and the celebration of Eid Al-Adha. The branch provided information on a variety of protocol matters to a diverse number of groups, organizations, and individual Albertans.

In June the branch lent advice and support to the Canadian Forces Reserve recognition day, which involved a parade on the Legislature grounds. This event paid tribute to the contributions reservists make to province and country. The branch worked with Justice department officials and representatives from various police services and organizations to organize the first annual Peace Officers' Memorial Day in September. The memorial, co-ordinated by the Department of Justice, is to be held annually to commemorate the police and peace officers who have died in the line of duty.

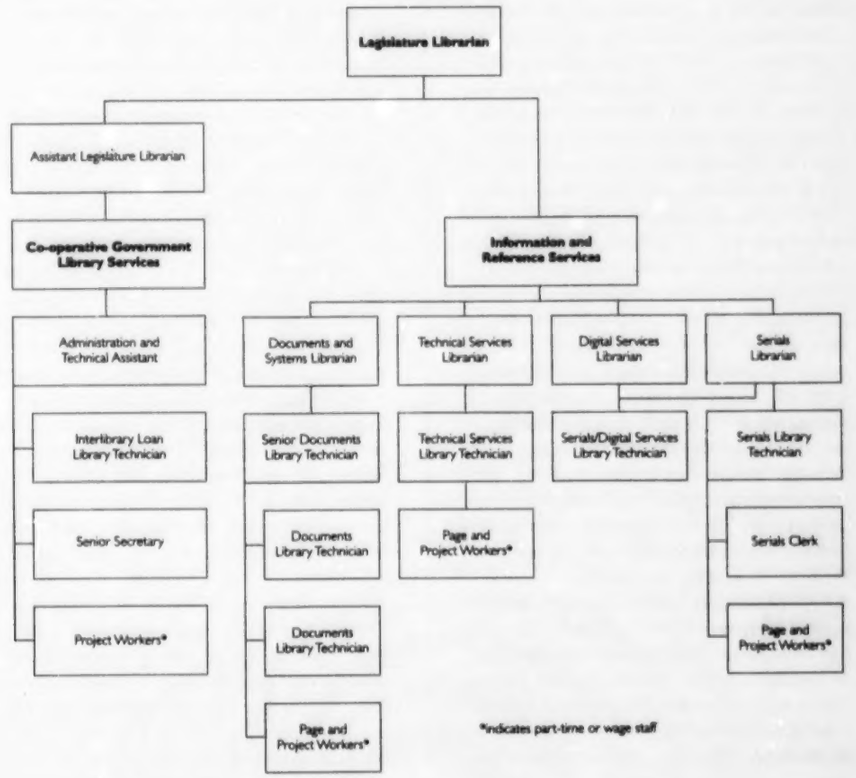
Following an earlier commitment, the branch produced the first ever newsletter for the Canadian Association of Sergeants-at-Arms. This initiative attracted much favourable comment from colleagues nationally and internationally. The second edition was underway at year's end. Other outreach activities in 1999 included meeting with numerous school groups, visiting dignitaries, and individuals to explain and promote Alberta's parliament.

CSS supported LAO initiatives by collaborating with other branches. The Sergeant-at-Arms worked with Human Resource Services (HRS) and Parliamentary Counsel (Counsel) on a number of human resource policy issues. Along with the Clerk, the director of Public Information, the procedural clerk, and the Royal Canadian Legion, the branch contributed to the outstanding success of the first annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament, a unique event that received wide and favourable publicity.

More than 150 guests attended the Library's first open house and tea in May.

Information, Reference, and Co-ordination Services: Legislature Library

Sandra E. Perry, Legislature Librarian



Function Statement

- Provides information and reference services to the Legislative Assembly
- Co-ordinates a number of co-operative programs among Alberta government libraries

The Library expanded the electronic services available to members and staff this year. The creation of a new digital services librarian position and access to new full-text databases contributed to this expansion of service. To keep members and staff up-to-date on the Library's services, staff posted informa-

tion on the web site, created a new Library brochure, and held an open house in the spring. The branch also co-ordinated changes to Library space, continued preservation of historical materials, and supported several Assembly events.

The Library continued to provide timely and accurate information services to members and responded to their demands for technology-related services in a definitive way. The Library's 1999 budget and electronic data processing (EDP) plan were built with the primary goal of responding to members' needs for more electronic information services. The Members' Services Committee approved a position to co-ordinate digital services and to further automate the library processes for 1999-2000. Consequently, a digital services librarian was hired in May, and a clerical position was restructured to provide part-time technical support to this position.

Access to new full-text databases such as InfoTrac allowed staff to frequently improve upon the standard 48-hour turnaround. In urgent circumstances and depending on workloads, staff were sometimes able to deliver information within the hour. With appropriate budget planning, which forecast inflation and exchange rates, staff made every effort to maintain the currency and comprehensiveness of the collection, including tracking and acquiring in a timely manner relevant reports mentioned in the press. In addition, the arrival of the digital services librarian increased the Library's ability to provide research services in French. The quality of the Library's research tools was improved by moving from dumb terminals to personal computers for all staff and by preparing to move from the DOS-based Dynix system to the Windows-based Horizon software for the catalogue interface.

The Library also provided clients with greater access to electronic services through subscriptions and appropriate licensing arrangements and through the development of the Library's Intranet site, which members can access directly from their desktop. To serve members' needs for immediate access to news stories in their jurisdiction and across the country, the Library obtained a licensing agreement with QuickLaw to provide daily access to Parliamentary Daily News Digest (PDND), a service highlighting the day's news of interest to legislators from major news sources across the country. The full text of these news items is available at the Library or by going to the online version of the newspaper from the links on the Library web site. Library staff took a more proactive approach to anticipating members' needs by producing full-text bibliographies on high-profile topics. These were initially e-mailed to members but are now available on the Library Intranet site.

Also now on the web site are Library updating services, such as New Books in the Library (NBIL), Selected Periodical Articles in the Library (SPAL), and Webwatch, which were formerly e-mailed monthly to members and LAO staff. Hot Topics includes the new full-text bibliography service previously mentioned. The third series of these bibliographies, based on questions the Library received, was begun in December. There are also links to web sites of interest to members, including links to legislation and other publications from Legislatures across the country and internationally; links to government sites; links to other libraries; and ready access to all sorts of speech-making tools. Library staff hope that for those who prefer to get their information electronically, the Library's web site will become their primary portal to information resources. Of course, staff are still able to respond to members' requests using more traditional methods of communication whenever necessary. A key element of the Library's ability to increase these electronic services was to ensure staff received the necessary training. This year, staff received training in Windows 95, HTML, and Internet searching.

The move to new computers necessitated some reworking of Library space. The public area of the Library was redesigned to create both a more consolidated and client-friendly micromedia/copier centre and a separate work area for technical and clerical staff. Revamping an old storage area created a new office in the Library proper for the digital services librarian. A plan to renovate the reference area was developed to provide a more ergonomic work space for reference personnel and more client-friendly access to Library staff. Greater automation of staff desktops created a need for more ergonomic workstations, and staff received new chairs this year as a first step in meeting that need. A modular reference desk unit, designed to fit with the decor of the rest of the Library, was under construction at year's end.

As the Library made these changes in its method of doing business, it kept the members and their staff up-to-date on all developments. In May Library staff produced a colourful new brochure outlining hours of operation, staff information, Library services, and procedures. It was updated in December. Another communication vehicle was the Library's first and, hopefully, annual Spring Tea and Open House held in early May. Large quantities of homemade goodies, along with brochures and descriptions of individual Library services, greeted the 150 guests who attended.

In December, at the LAO's constituency staff seminar, Library staff gave a presentation about Library services that was well received. Throughout the year Library staff were also involved in overall LAO planning and co-operative ventures. They contributed enthusiastically to ideas for Alberta's centennial and devoted significant time and effort to the United Way campaign, *Under the Dome*, ladies of the Legislature Christmas party (co-chair), and the staff recognition dinner. A new co-operative committee, formed under the auspices and leadership of Information Systems Services (ISS), was the web committee. Because of past expertise developing web sites, the Library's representative was able to contribute substantially to this effort.

The Co-operative Government Library Services Section (CGLS) continued to publish the Alberta Government Libraries' Newsletter and the Directory of Alberta Government Libraries and Resource Centres, with an electronic version of the latter being posted on the Library's home page. CGLS staff also maintained the Union List of Serials in Alberta Government and College Libraries and administered a client survey to help determine future directions for the service. Document delivery service and maintenance of the government's periodical storage facility continued to be responsibilities of the section; staff reorganized the storage facility during the summer.

The section's manager served as ex-officio member of the Alberta Government Libraries' Council executive, contributing to the work of the council's performance measures committee and the design of a brochure on government library services for distribution at the Building Our Future Conference and Knowledge Fair in December.

Newspapers being microfilmed for the 1999-2000 fiscal year included those from the communities of Huxley, Legal, Sibbald, Waskatenau, the MD of Starland, and the French language newspaper, *L'Union*. As well, the Library, in partnership with the Sexsmith Museum Society, embarked on microfilming the *Sexsmith Sentinel*, 1949-1954. In cases where the Library has either microfilmed a newspaper or purchased newspapers on microfilm, the Library has offered the original papers to the local community. This year the Library donated print files of the *Camrose Canadian* for the 1980s and 1990s to the Camrose Museum Society.

In May the Library welcomed two students who contributed to a variety of special projects over the summer months. It was the first time the Library participated in the Alberta/Quebec exchange program. A computing science student from Quebec City worked with the digital services librarian to create web pages for some Library publications that had previously existed only in print format and helped improve access to Quebec government publications. A Grant MacEwan library technology student helped serials staff gather information to enhance the related records in the Library's Dynix system. The students, as well as the Library pages, were instrumental in reorganizing and updating the Library's periodical storage facility in the Terrace Building.

The Library made a commitment to devote more time and effort to preserving the legislative and historical records of Alberta, but suffered a setback this summer when renovations to the first floor of the Legislature Building caused considerable water damage to the collections. One hundred and fifty boxes of materials had to be

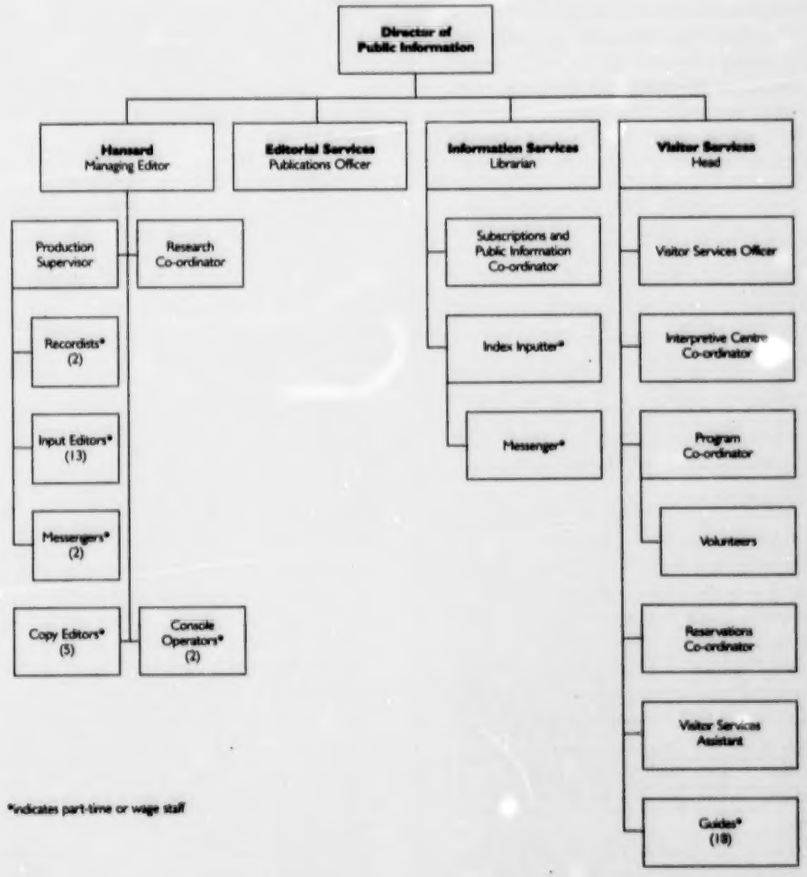
restored. The staff, including a temporary staff person hired specifically for this purpose, and student assistants devoted almost an entire month to the recovery and shipping of materials. At year's end those materials still awaited reintegration into the collection. Despite this setback there were several positive outcomes. Staff now have considerable expertise in disaster recovery from water damage, which developed as a result of consultations with experts from across the country on best practices in this field. This kind of in-house knowledge is useful wherever collections are housed in older buildings. Library staff have made a point of sharing knowledge and expertise on this subject and others with institutions locally and across the country.

Comparative Statistics	1999	1998
Information and Reference Services		
Total number of volumes by conventional count	304,830	287,815
Circulation items borrowed for use outside the Library	5,493	6,385
Electronic Circulation of Current Awareness Services	5,196	5,200
Number of requests requiring less than 15 minutes to complete	6,419	7,470
Number of requests requiring 15 minutes to one hour to complete	536	817
Number of requests requiring more than one hour to complete	80	48
Number of online searches	447	219
Number of times the online catalogue was accessed through the Internet	5,090	4,821
Co-operative Government Library Services		
Titles in Union List of Serials in Alberta Government Libraries	11,779	11,834
Number of interlibrary requests from Information and Reference Services (Members)	288	150
Number of interlibrary requests by Alberta Government Libraries	1,876	2,076
Number of requests by Alberta Government Libraries for professional advice	66	78

Students from Gramina school were among the over 200 students who created exhibits for the Heritage Fair in the pedway.

Public Education and Reporting Services: Public Information Branch

Gary Garrison, Director



*indicates part-time or wage staff

Function Statement

- Produces the official report of what is said during meetings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees
- Welcomes visitors and provides public education services for the Assembly
- Provides public information about the Assembly
- Prints and distributes Assembly publications

In addition to providing reliable transcripts of proceedings, public information, regular services to visitors, and a variety of other services, the Public Information Branch (PIB) facilitated and assisted with a number of successful special events. Among the highlights were Canada Day, once again drawing over 6,000 visitors, December evenings with over 15,000 visitors, and the first Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament. Visitor numbers overall increased by 16 percent, and gift shop sales were up by 15 percent.

Hansard staff continued to provide timely and accurate service for the Assembly. The workload this year was similar to that of 1998 except that in the fall the night sittings went considerably longer than the previous year. The evening sitting on December 7 concluded at 4:38 a.m. December 8. Despite these long hours, *Hansard* staff consistently produced high quality transcripts. The only *Hansard* issue delayed because of the very long sitting was the December 8 issue, which was published on December 10, two days after the fall sittings ended.

Hansard staff remained busy throughout the year preparing training materials, producing transcripts for committee meetings, and revising guidelines for editors. A number of new input editors were trained early in the year. As in the past, a *Hansard* editor proofread private members' bills before the spring sittings opened. Prior to the fall sittings, staff implemented a number of *Hansard* manual revisions, among them a number of macros to make the editorial comments regarding House procedure more user friendly. An input editor received training as a copy editor in the fall, and prior to the fall sittings, a competition was held and seven new input editors hired, with training scheduled for January.

In July the director participated in the triennial Commonwealth *Hansard* Editors Conference in Ulundi, South Africa, where he made a presentation on editorial style and measuring the quality of *Hansard* transcripts. Following the conference he was seconded to the provincial Legislature in Mpumalanga, South Africa for a week, and submitted a report to the Speaker of Mpumalanga based on his observation of *Hansard* operations. In August the director and two staff members attended the Canadian *Hansard* association annual conference in Yellowknife. The director continued to serve as the secretary-treasurer of that organization.

After using the same custom software program to sort and retrieve *Hansard* index data for almost 10 years, Information Systems Services (ISS) purchased new Cindex software in 1998. When PIB staff tested it prior to the opening of the 1999 session, Cindex met all performance expectations. This made possible a number of format changes to the index to make it easier to use. ISS staff also assisted in testing and implementing new software to manage subscriptions, since the subscription data management system that had been in use for several years was no longer compatible with the network and needed replacing. Renewal invoices for year 2000 subscriptions were accurately generated in the fall using the new system. In addition to these improvements, staff continued to handle a steady volume of telephone and e-mail information requests throughout the year and to provide congratulatory scrolls at a rate comparable to the demand of previous years.

The total number of visitors welcomed by Visitor Services was up 16 percent from 1998. The biggest increase was during the Christmas season when visitors came in the evenings to see the lights, listen to choirs in the Rotunda during lunch hours and evenings, and walk through the pedway to look at gingerbread houses and Christmas trees. Once again Visitor Services conducted a gingerbread house contest, this year with 38 entries from Edmonton area schools. School groups were also invited to decorate the Christmas trees in the pedway using items they created or obtained for the purpose. This year guides were on hand seven days a week to meet and greet visitors and offer them hot chocolate from December 2 through December 23; in 1998 guides were on duty only on weeknights. As well, more choirs performed this year than previously.

The number of visitors on booked tours in 1999 increased, but the number of walk-in visitors declined. The number of visitors admitted to the galleries to observe the Assembly in session was virtually unchanged from 1998. The volume of sales in the gift shop increased by 15 percent.

Alberta hosted the 10th annual Visitor Services national conference in June. Representatives from most other Legislatures attended, including, for the first time, someone from Nunavut. Staff organized a number of professional development activities, including a half day with program staff at the Provincial Museum. The program also included a luncheon hosted by the Speaker and attended by the Clerk and LAO managers. The Assembly continued to be a leader within this organization, as it has been since Alberta hosted the first conference in 1990.

The head of Visitor Services was an active member of the Canadian Capital Cities Organization (CCCO) and played a key role in organizing the Canada Day family exchange program, which Alberta participated in for the first time in 1999. This involved the families meeting with the Speaker and lunch in the pedway on June 30 as well as lunch with the Minister of Municipal Affairs at Government House on July 1. This program was a successful complement to the Canada Day festivities at the Legislature, which in 1999 involved staff from several LAO branches. As in 1998, over 6,000 visitors came into the Legislature on Canada Day.

In May the pedway was the site of the Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair. There were 209 exhibits in the pedway on May 14 and 15 and programs for 369 students from grades 4 through 9. The organizing committee was pleased with the success of the fair, and the attractiveness of the venue led to hosting the National Heritage Fair in the pedway in July. Many of the Heritage Fair exhibits were displayed for the remainder of the summer as part of an Opportunities for Youth exhibit in the pedway. By November these exhibits had left to make room for a series of exhibits publicizing millennium projects and celebrations that will be occurring across Alberta in the year 2000. As well, in the spring a new permanent exhibit on Alberta emblems was created with the generous support of the Provincial Museum.

In the spring Visitor Services staff presented a teacher workshop at an Edmonton area school. This involved conducting a Mock Legislature program with a group of teachers and giving them a general orientation to the Legislature and the Assembly's on-site programs. Because of the success of the Mock Legislature program and interest expressed in it by other Legislatures, a member of the staff was invited to run the program in Ottawa with a group of about 20 teachers participating in the Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy.

The School-at-the-Legislature program also continued in the spring, and plans were made at year's end to extend the pilot project into 2000. In the meantime, with the support of Infrastructure and Community Development, classroom space was developed on the ground floor of the Legislature Annex in late spring. A number of potential corporate sponsors were approached in the fall, and the plans were made for the program to operate through the entire school year once sponsorship is secured.

In July Visitor Services staff supported the Klondike Days breakfast on the south Legislature grounds instead of organizing a breakfast on the north grounds, as occurred the previous three years.

In late October the annual Halloween-o-rama took place on the north grounds and in the pedway, attracting 6,773 visitors. In mid-November the fourth annual craft sale took

place in the pedway in front of the interpretive centre. Twenty-six vendors took part, and the response from vendors and visitors alike continued to be positive.

A staff person who had served as reservations co-ordinator for over nine years vacated the position in October. An open competition was held and a new person hired for the position in mid-December.

The branch produced numerous publications in 1999. During the first half of the year, the director submitted two articles for publication in parliamentary magazines. An article on Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament appeared in *The Canadian Parliamentary Review*; one on MLA remuneration was published in the *Parliamentarian*. Other publication work during the year included production of the 1998 LAO annual report; speechwriting for the Speaker and other officials; co-ordination of the program design and display panel production for the Famous Five portraits unveiling in December; production of a number of programs, flyers, and other printed materials for the Speaker's Office; revisions to the *Members' Guide*; redesign of corporate documents, including a fax cover sheet; production of the semi-annual staff newsletter and bi-monthly events bulletin *Preview*; and a variety of other projects. PIB staff also co-ordinated the design and production of a new Mace image for use as a visual identifier on Assembly documents. At the end of the year the director was working on preliminary plans for commemorative plaques.

As chair of the steering committee, the director collaborated with the Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and the procedural clerk in planning the first annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament. Table Officers, *Hansard* staff, and Visitor Services staff also participated in the project. The program was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. This event involved 83 grade 10 students, one representing each of Alberta's constituencies, as well as 15 grade 10 social studies teachers. It was designed to give students direct experience of the parliamentary democratic process and to enhance the teaching of the parliamentary system in Alberta. Feedback from all participants, MLAs, and the Legion was enthusiastically positive. The proceedings were broadcast live on Access television, thanks to the support of the Access Network and CFRN television.

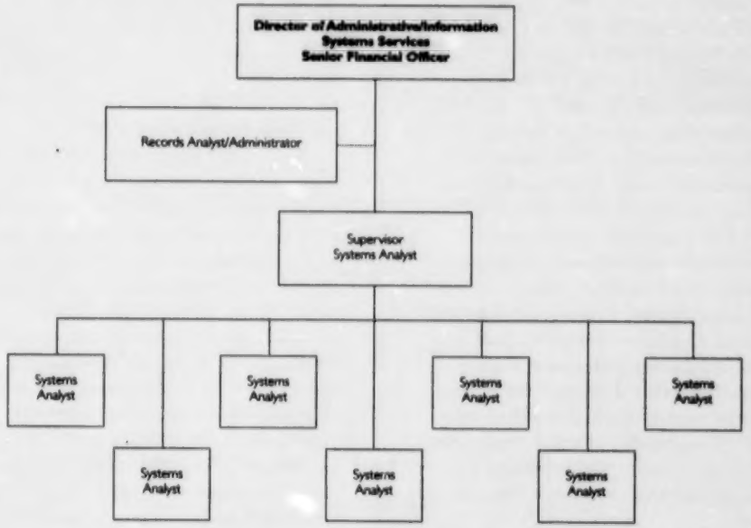
Six teachers from the Alberta Teachers' Association's Social Studies Council served on the teachers advisory committee, helping with all areas of planning: Linda-Rae Carson, Phyllis Schumacher, Bill Shostak, Bill Smolak, Arlene Cairns, and Craig Wallace. Their assistance ensured that the program was relevant and interesting for the participants and was a major factor in the program's success. By the end of 1999 planning was well under way for the second edition of the youth parliament. In October the annual Social Studies Council conference included a session with the Speaker in the Chamber and a group of 40 social studies teachers where they heard about the youth parliament and the Speaker's interest in furthering the teaching of responsible citizenship in schools.

In addition to the youth parliament, PIB collaborated with staff of other LAO branches on a variety of projects. Branch staff participated in the ergonomics committee, the United Way committee, the staff recognition dinner organizing committee, and the new web site committee. For the second year the branch assisted with co-ordination of a successful Speaker's Cup golf tournament, which again involved 140 golfers and nearly 200 dinner guests.

Comparative Statistics	1999	1998
Visitors to Legislature and Interpretive Centre		
Visitors on tour	45,356	46,449
Special events	36,789	21,612
Casual	37,435	35,157
Total	**119,580**	**103,218**
Tours and Programs		
Regular tours	2,817	2,959
VIP tours	13	13
Educational programs	366	426
Civil service orientation	2	7
Gallery seats reserved	12,084	12,277
Volunteer hours	403.25	680.5
Gift Shop sales	$ 85,325	$ 88,960
MLA promotional items	$ 177,767	$ 139,740
Public Information and Subscriptions		
Public information calls	6,802	6,963
Congratulatory scrolls	2,312	2,403
Paid subscriptions		
Daily *Hansard*	375	304
Hansard bound volumes	43	34
Bills, Votes	275	282
Journals	275	282
Complimentary issues		
Daily *Hansard*	264	351
Hansard bound volumes	102	90
Bills, Votes	469	511
Order Paper	310	327
Hansard index and on-line inquiries	63	81
Web site inquiries	91	109
Assembly Statistics		
Hansard pages	2,397	2,428
Subcommittees of Supply		
Meetings reported	17	17
Meeting hours	41	37
Transcript pages	280	262
Standing and special committees		
Meetings reported	31	52
Meeting hours	53	90
Transcript pages	403	686
Miscellaneous Transcripts		
Meetings reported	1	
Meeting hours	5	
Transcript pages	40	
Total *Hansard*, committee, and miscellaneous transcript pages	**3,120**	**3,376**

Administrative/Information Systems Services: Information Systems Services

Bill Gano, Director and Senior Financial Officer



Function Statement

- Provides financial and administrative support to the Legislative Assembly
- Provides electronic data processing and office automation services to the Legislative Assembly
- Acts as co-ordinator for the administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Provides records management services to the Legislative Assembly Office

Information Systems Services (ISS) is a service branch charged with providing technology and records management services, as well as support related to Senior Financial Officer duties and co-ordination of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for the members and staff of the Legislative Assembly. Year 2000 (Y2K) compliance issues came to the fore in 1999, making it the year of the millennium for ISS. Most of the branch's work was geared to ensure that all potential Y2K system problems were anticipated and prevented. In 1999 the branch also completed a

major upgrade to the electronic mail system, responded to increased demands for technology-related services from MLAs and staff, and continued to offer timely and reliable support service, regular upgrades, and maintenance to all system users. As well, the branch led the process to redesign and expand the Assembly's web site and to develop a new Intranet site.

In anticipation of Y2K most ISS activities revolved around ensuring that the Legislative Assembly was ready for the transition. This required reviewing every piece of hardware and software owned by the Assembly and taking the appropriate steps to ensure Y2K compliance. Branch staff devoted a good portion of the year to upgrading all systems, from individual workstations to mail servers and file servers, to achieve Y2K compliance. In most cases ISS applied software patches to upgrade application software or the system BIOS (Basic Input/Output System). In some cases complete workstations needed to be replaced. Staff checked and double-checked every piece of computer hardware and software. Before year's end the branch had upgraded to Y2K compliance all 83 constituency offices, 200 networked workstations in the Legislature Building and Annex, and the whole Legislative Assembly network.

ISS began upgrading the e-mail system (GroupWise) in 1998 and completed the process in 1999. Once the network at the Legislature was upgraded, work began on the constituency offices. This was a gradual transition, converting a few offices at a time over the first six months of the year. As well, ISS worked with a number of MLAs to set up their notebook computers for use in the Chamber, ensuring that they have access to both electronic mail and the Internet. By the end of the year 42 MLAs' notebooks were connected.

ISS staff made significant improvements to the Assembly's internal and external web sites. Internet changes included access to the text of bills and amendments, Standing Orders, and other House records, as well as the capacity to search these materials. The branch also improved the MLA directory in order to provide easier query and report functions. Intranet enhancements made time sheets, expense claims, and other forms available electronically. In 1999 the forms were available on-line for printing, but plans were made to enable members and staff to complete and submit their forms through the computer rather than having to write them out and mail them in.

To facilitate further web site development, the branch formed and chaired a web site committee with representatives from each branch. This committee began planning and implementing web site developments, focusing first on the new Intranet page, *Our House*, which was officially launched in the fall of 1999.

A significant administrative development related to telephones occurred in 1999. The area code for northern Alberta changed in January 1999. In anticipation of this ISS began planning for the required changes in 1998. Because of this pre-planning the area code change had minimal impact on the operation of the Assembly. In addition, a system implemented to manage the trouble calls to the branch logged almost 2,000 calls in 1999. ISS practice has been to enter most calls into the system and to keep response/resolution time to a minimum.

ISS provided expertise to all branches during the budget process. Because of this the presentation of the Legislative Assembly's 2000-2001 budget estimates to the Members' Services Committee went very well. Other areas of activity included testing, installing, maintaining, and upgrading in-house information management systems including: accounts payable, payroll, inventory, library, visitor reservations, Speaker's Office, and point-of-sale. Staff also purchased, installed, moved, and maintained computer terminals, printers, and software and provided training, advice, and other assistance to users. As well, numerous word processing, spreadsheet, e-mail, database, and financial systems training sessions were conducted, and network servers and workstations as well as remote workstations continued to be maintained and upgraded to maintain currency with today's technology.

The branch also continued to meet the needs of all constituency offices in the province, and Legislative Assembly Management Information System (LAMIS) continued to provide keyword lookup facilities to *Hansard* and Alberta statutes as well as the bill status report, the required tablings record, tablings, government motions, private members' motions, written questions and motions for returns, the RITE directory, committees and commissions, and Canadian phone books.

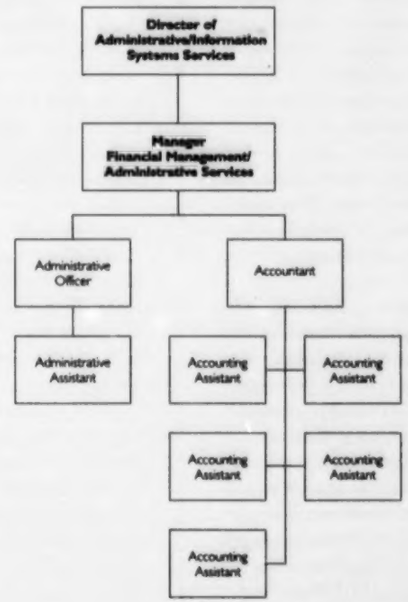
In addition to the web committee, ISS worked closely with all branches of the LAO in a number of areas. The EDP Management Committee, chaired by the director of Administrative/Information Systems Services, continued to meet regularly to set and manage the priorities of the Assembly. One of the more pleasurable activities ISS, Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS), and Human Resource Services (HRS) were involved with this year was presenting constituency office seminars in Edmonton and Calgary in the spring. A third seminar involving the other branches occurred in December. Plans were made to make this an annual function.

Other responsibilities addressed related to FOIP, records management, the Senior Financial Officer, and LAO policies and procedures. Of note were a request for access to former members' benefit records and the production of the Legislative Assembly's first set of financial statements.

Comparative Statistics	1999	1998
Equipment in place		
Constituency workstations	117	108
Constituency printers	115	101
LAN workstations	171	154
LAN laser printers	56	56
Dedicated library workstations	4	18
Servers	20	20
Scanners	4	3
Notebook computers	98	78
Equipment replaced		
Obsolete workstations	60	63
Obsolete laser printers	13	30
Obsolete laptop computers	6	2
Training		
Person-days of training	86	164
Help Desk Calls		
Help calls logged	1,969	1,917

Administrative/Information Systems Services: Financial Management and Administrative Services

Jacqueline Breault, Manager



Function Statement

- Provides financial and administrative support to the Legislative Assembly

In 1999 Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS) developed a number of measures to improve financial and accounts reporting and began using several new electronic commerce tools. FMAS also maintained leases, provided telecommunications support and advice, upgraded office equipment, and ordered stationary supplies for members and staff.

The branch successfully entered budget information for the current fiscal year into the Legislative Assembly Management Information System (LAMIS) early in the year and provided Treasury with 1999-2000 budget information for

production of the Assembly estimates book and for consolidation with government budget figures. In addition, quarterly budget and expenditure forecasts and actuals continued to be produced for Treasury as required by legislation. In November the branch also processed internal budget adjustments for the Assembly's independent member.

FMAS completed its budget preparation for the upcoming fiscal year in the fall of 1999 and assisted the Speaker and the Members' Services Committee during the budget approval process when the committee met in December. By June work on fiscal year-end was successfully completed, including all year-end accruals, and by the end of August the branch completed a full reconciliation of balance sheet financial information to March 31, 1999, to ensure the accuracy of financial reporting for the LAO. Staff worked with the Auditor General's Office to prepare the LAO's annual financial statements. This was a learning process designed to help branch staff complete future statements more easily and quickly in future.

FMAS continued to control the LAO bank account for accountable advances and the account holding funds voted to the LAO by the Legislative Assembly. The branch is responsible for the accounts, including monitoring their reconciliation, which is done by PSC Payment Systems Corporation. Continued attention was given to completing ongoing, as opposed to periodic, financial and bank account statement reconciliations because of the increased responsibility of having an independent financial system and LAO bank account. The branch procured foreign exchange currency or money orders for authorized travel or purchases by branches, legislature committees, or for expenses related to the Assembly's participation in interparliamentary activities.

Service to MLAs, Legislature, and constituency office staff continued to be timely, helpful, and accurate. This year the branch improved its accounts reporting by creating a new management report on members' non-financial information, a summary report of monthly Members' Services allowance balances, and added information about members' remuneration for MLA expense and allowance reports for the fiscal year 1998-99. Staff followed up on financial records requests by members subsequent to MLAs receiving these reports. Ministerial and government committee remuneration were again processed through the payroll system and charged back to departments. FMAS tracked, receipted, and credited back all the charge-backs.

Administrative staff provided patient, friendly, and informative services to clients and ensured all administrative activities were accomplished in a timely and comprehensive manner. Staff helped the director determine the impact of Y2K on constituency and LAO operations, evaluating equipment for Y2K readiness and keeping members informed. Upgrades to the LAMIS system were implemented periodically throughout the year with the assistance of branch and Information Systems Services (ISS) staff. These upgrades ensured programs were Y2K compliant.

FMAS administered and maintained leases, including renewals, cancellations, or amendments for approximately 90 locations. The branch also provided property management services for constituency offices, made physical arrangements for moving office equipment and furnishings for five offices, and addressed insurance issues and maintenance concerns for members and their staff. Staff also continued to act as the LAO liaison with the Risk Management and Insurance branch of Treasury. They assisted branches and constituency offices with claims arising from thefts and damage to property as a result of flooding and vandalism. Branch staff also provided assistance with policy and procedure questions.

The branch provided telecommunications advice to members regarding cellular equipment and peripherals; reviewed air time programs and adjustments as required; reviewed constituency offices for consideration of equipment or service upgrades, including one upgrade to the Centrex system and three upgrades to alternate systems; negotiated the best toll program for all residential and business phones; and liaised with Alberta Infrastructure telecommunications staff. FMAS also provided input to Public Affairs Bureau staff for a new RITE directory format and streamlined and enhanced telephone directory advertising systems for members and their constituency offices.

Staff kept up with telecommunications technology and regulatory changes such as the abolition of mobile service and provided telecommunications troubleshooting and information on the new northern Alberta area code change and its implications. FMAS worked with Telus to ensure their new billing systems would be implemented properly for the Assembly. Throughout the year administrative staff co-ordinated necessary telephone relocations, helped accounts staff clarify or troubleshoot administrative invoices or statements, and administered the calling card and credit card programs for long distance tolls and MLA gasoline purchases and travel.

The branch provided information and assistance with upgrades to photocopiers and faxes and continued the upgrade of constituency office photocopiers. Administrative staff were instrumental in the selection and installation of new photocopier equipment and related staff training for LAO branches throughout the year.

Accounts and administrative staff studied and implemented the use of several electronic commerce tools and databases, including Diners Club/enRoute Globalvision, Telus Bill 2000, PHH on-line billing information, and MasterCard. In particular, extensive work was done with the Bill 2000 program to generate calling card usage reports for members. Administrative staff also developed a new fixed assets tracking program, which was implemented during the summer.

The branch purchased letterhead, business cards, and other stationery and supplies items for MLAs, their staff, and their constituency offices and arranged for bulk orders in 1999 in anticipation of the provincial area code change. Staff provided more than 200 stationery and office supply items to 95 percent of constituency offices and all LAO branches and administered the Legislature lounge supplies program during the spring and fall sittings of the Legislature.

FMAS also continued to liaise with private sector vendors interested in providing goods and services to the Assembly.

Individual staff workloads were reviewed and adjusted based on changing work volumes, clients' needs, and requirements for cross training. Branch staff continued to develop their skills through participation in projects and external training with vendors as well as through academic and professional courses. In overall staff changes, an FMAS member providing leave cover-off moved into a position as a human resource assistant.

Along with staff from ISS, records management, and human resources, the branch conducted constituency office staff information sessions in Calgary and Edmonton. Besides presenting general information, staff were able to answer questions and meet with constituency staff in a relaxed atmosphere. This proved useful for both constituency and branch staff.

The branch participated in the development of the Assembly's internal web site. Using input from all branch staff, the administrative team developed, organized, and composed the FMAS page, which includes extensive materials on policies and procedures, contact information, and on-line forms. Since the site was launched, FMAS staff have continued to add information of interest to members and Assembly staff. Representatives from the branch also served as members of the EDP committee, the *Under the Dome* editorial board, the ergonomics committee, the United Way committee, provided support for the staff recognition dinner, and volunteered for events such as the Speaker's Cup golf tournament. Staff also provided back-up assistance during orientations and meetings that took the attention of management away from the branch as well as assisted with the preparation of materials for those events.

Comparative Statistics	1999	1998
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19A)	20,109	21,416
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19E)*	0	195
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19F)*	0	514
Constituency offices, moved	5	4
Constituency offices, new	0	0
Constituency offices, closed	0	2
Leases processed (new or renewals)	6	-
Telecommunications services installed or moved	5	11
Telecommunications - service requests	105	-
Mail processed	12,740	13,107
Direct purchase orders issued	133	159
MLA purchase orders processed	4,975	5,125
Other requests processed	2,350	2,450
Special requests processed	263	221

*Note: The Offices of the Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner began processing their own accounts payable effective October 1, 1998.

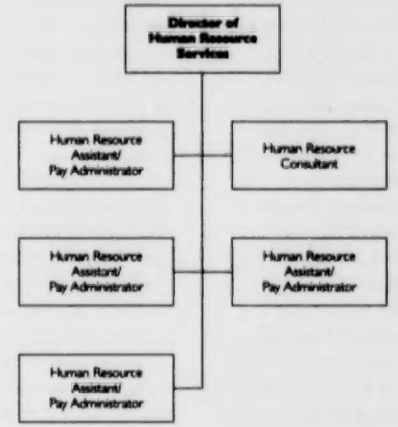
Legislative Assembly Office Estimates

Description	1999-2000	1998-1999
Human Resource Expenses		
Earnings - Management	$ 877,120	$ 788,976
Earnings - Nonmanagement	5,122,072	4,797,015
Employer Contributions	953,829	901,593
Allowances & Supplementary Benefits	137,867	115,178
Subtotal	**$ 7,090,888**	**$ 6,602,762**
Operational Expenses		
Travel	$ 1,488,134	$ 1,462,417
Advertising	155,089	159,700
Insurance	51,000	50,000
Postage and Freight	143,080	174,237
Office Equipment Rental/Purchase	436,555	380,014
Telecommunications	482,486	467,697
Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	55,400	56,191
Other Labour & Services	587,751	519,435
Data Processing Equipment & Services	322,300	319,632
Hosting	80,708	58,258
Other Administration/Supplies	546,438	530,644
Rentals	4,000	1,400
Subtotal	**$ 4,352,941**	**$ 4,179,625**
Grants		
General	$ 2,560	$ 2,560
Subtotal	**$ 2,560**	**$ 2,560**
Payments to Members of the Legislative Assembly		
Payments to MLAs	$ 7,223,879	$ 6,437,652
Subtotal	**$ 7,223,879**	**$ 6,437,652**
Members' Services Allowances		
Constituency Office Allowances	$ 3,466,572	$ 3,378,266
Communication Allowances	1,104,928	1,080,675
Promotion Allowances	304,252	304,679
Subtotal	**$ 4,875,752**	**$ 4,763,620**
Revenue		
Fees and Permits	$ 1,200	$ 1,200
Other Revenue	135,100	132,360
Subtotal	**$ (136,300)**	**$ (133,560)**
Net Total	**$ 23,409,720**	**$ 21,852,659**

Constituency office staff, with Speaker Ken Kowalski (left), attend the staff recognition dinner for the first time.

Human Resource Services

Cheryl Scarlett, Director


Director of Human Resource Services
Human Resource Assistant/ Pay Administrator
Human Resource Consultant
Human Resource Assistant/ Pay Administrator
Human Resource Assistant/ Pay Administrator
Human Resource Assistant/ Pay Administrator

Function Statement

- Provides human resource management services to the Legislative Assembly

Members and their constituency office employees remained a primary focus of the branch in 1999. Human Resource Services (HRS) provided professional and responsive support in all matters relating to human resource management, including salary, wage, and fee-for-service contract administration; pay and benefits management; recruitment; occupational health and safety; job classification; employee relations and performance appraisal; training and employee development; and issues related to attendance, maternity, illness, and workers' compensation leaves. This same expertise was provided to managers and staff of the caucus offices and the Legislative Assembly Office.

Highlights and challenges for HRS were many and varied this year. Maintenance and ongoing enhancement of the in-house payroll system continued, including streamlining third-party reconciliations and reporting. The system proved to be very flexible in addressing our changing pay requirements. The production and issuance of T4 slips and Revenue Canada summary information at year-end also went smoothly. By the end of 1999 implementation of the human resource component of the present system was well underway.

The first choice point for the LAO's employee 1st Choice benefit plan occurred in July 1999. This was employees' first opportunity to make changes to their optional benefits. The branch prepared personalized choice forms and information packages for staff and consulted with all salaried employees about their available options. Once employees made their choices, HRS updated the appropriate information on the files, in the system, and, as required, with the various benefit carriers.

This year the branch spent considerable time and effort supporting issues related to extended illness or accident. Five employees were absent for extended periods due to illness, four received long-term disability insurance benefits, and six reported work site incidents. In each case HRS worked with the employee, medical practitioners, supervisor, and case or claims administrators to ensure a safe and productive return to work.

General activity related to pay and benefit administration was heavy throughout the year. HRS worked closely with all staff to overcome problems with processing dental claims associated with the conversion of Mutual Life to Clarica. The branch implemented adjustments to rate changes including decreased pension contributions in August. Refund amounts were calculated and paid as appropriate.

Human resources continued to assist staff and managers with commencements, terminations, and transfers of staff in and out of the organization. Branch staff co-ordinated 14 competitions for the LAO, conducting 143 interviews and hiring 34 staff. Pay increases and adjustments were processed as required. HRS also managed the summer temporary employment program (STEP), which employed 75 additional staff in constituency, caucus, and LAO offices, and co-ordinated the Quebec/Alberta exchange program, which allocated three students to the LAO in the summer of 1999.

On behalf of the Information Systems Services (ISS) branch HRS conducted a review to assess industry norms, trends, retention strategies, and challenges facing the information technology sector to attract and retain qualified staff. This assessment supported the LAO's guidelines that were implemented to ensure ISS staff remains competitive with industry norms.

Following the direction of the Members' Services Committee, the branch implemented a 2.44 percent increase to the MLA indemnity and tax-free allowance and all other related MLA remuneration on April 1, 1999. As with any MLA adjustment, HRS responded to questions from the public, produced and distributed general fact sheets explaining the change, and posted related information on the Assembly's web site. As well, the branch participated in co-ordinating and processing changes to MLA pay and benefits resulting from a cabinet shuffle in May. The shuffle also had an impact on pay related to government committee appointments. Human resources continued to liaise with members, Executive Council, and government department representatives to initiate, pay, recover, and monitor payments made to MLAs on behalf of departments for ministerial and government committee payments. In the fall HRS provided human resource support to the new independent member.

This year the Speaker sent each member an individual summary of benefits and entitlements brochure for the first time, outlining personal benefit choices and standard entitlements. HRS made plans to prepare similar information for members on a regular basis. As well, pursuant to direction from the Members' Services Committee, each member was again provided with a vacation accrual report in January detailing the accrued vacation costs for present employees in constituency offices. Similar requests related to employees' entitlements were also addressed with both caucus and LAO employees.

The LAO continued to be a leader, both in the province of Alberta and among Canadian Legislatures, in the development of an ergonomics program. The ergonomics committee, led by HRS and composed of representatives from all branches, developed and implemented a practical education and awareness program with a custom information brochure, orientation sessions, and individual workstation assessments. Presentations in 1999 focused on staff of the constituency offices. A total of 118 constituency office and LAO employees attended training sessions. Thirty-one employees received individual on-site workstation assessments that resulted in improvements to workstation setups. Since the implementation of this program the number of significant injuries due to repetitive strain have decreased.

Human resources helped co-ordinate three information sessions for constituency office staff. These opportunities to exchange information and get employee feedback involved all branches of the LAO and proved to be very beneficial. Another interbranch activity was the LAO's annual employee recognition dinner in December, which constituency office staff attended for the first time. At the event the Speaker expressed appreciation to all staff for their continued support and service to the organization. HRS co-ordinated activities related to the recognition awards. Representatives from HRS also participated on the interbranch web site committee established to develop an expanded web site as an additional resource for MLAs, employees, and the public.

Special Events

Speaker Kowalski (left) with artist Alice Tyler and William Deacon at the unveiling of the Famous Five portraits on the fifth floor of the Legislature in December.

100th Anniversary of the Medicine Hat Police Service
On February 17 Speaker Kowalski hosted a flag presentation ceremony in the Legislature Rotunda to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Medicine Hat Police Service.

Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta
The Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognized the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta by flying their flag in the Legislature Building Rotunda alongside the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie's flag at a ceremony on March 16.

Eid Al-Adha
A ceremony recognizing Eid Al-Adha, or the Festival of Sacrifice, was held in the Legislature Rotunda on March 30. For Muslims around the world the festival marks the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Provincial Flags
On April 1 the flag of Nunavut joined the display of all Canadian provincial and territorial flags in the Chamber. That day Nunavut was created as Canada's third northern territory.

Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament
The first annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament was held April 15 and 16. Eighty-three grade 10 students representing each constituency and 15 social studies teachers from across Alberta came together to learn the parliamentary process by experiencing it for themselves. The Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion sponsored the event and was instrumental in its tremendous success. The youth parliament received wide publicity and was broadcast live by Access Network.

Page Speech Competition
A speech competition for the page development program, sponsored by TransAlta, was held on May 6. This year's prizewinners were Daniel Novak, first place; Howard Yeung, second place; and Simone Godbout and Janine Melnichuk, who tied for third place. Mr. Novak was accorded the rare privilege of delivering his speech in the Chamber while the Assembly was in session.

Heritage Fairs
On May 14 and 15 more than 200 student heritage projects created by grades 4 to 9 students lined the Legislature pedway when the Assembly hosted the fourth annual Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair. The Alberta School Heritage Fairs Project is part of a national program initiated in 1993 by the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation. Students across the country participate in local Heritage Fairs, creating exhibits that tell a story about an event or a Canadian they find inspiring. All projects with a mark of 80 percent or better were entered in a draw for a chance to attend the National Fair on July 17, which was also held at the Alberta Legislature.

Canada Day
On July 1 the floor of the Legislature Chamber was open to visitors for the second year during annual Canada Day events on the grounds. Visitors to the Chamber were welcomed by the Clerk and tour guides dressed in parliamentary robes. The event drew more than 6,000 people to the building and grounds. The Legislature also hosted several families as part of a national Canada Day exchange program co-ordinated by the Canadian Capital Cities Organization (CCCO).

Poppy Presentation
On October 27 in the Legislature Rotunda the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion launched their annual campaign with a poppy presentation to His Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor

H.A. "Bud" Olson; Mrs. Judy Gordan, Deputy Chairman of Committees, representing the Speaker; the Honourable David Hancock, Minister of Justice and Attorney General; Mrs. Nancy MacBeth, Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition; Dr. Raj Pannu, House Leader of the New Democrat Opposition; and other attending MLAs.

Remembrance Service
On November 9 Mrs. Judy Gordon, Deputy Chairman of Committees, represented the Speaker at the annual wreath laying ceremony in the Rotunda. Also in attendance were Premier Ralph Klein, Official Opposition Leader Nancy MacBeth, and New Democrat House Leader Raj Pannu. Representatives of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and a grade 6 student representing students throughout the province laid wreaths in memory of civil servants who gave their lives during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron
Speaker Kowalski hosted a ceremony to commemorate the laying up of the 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron standard in the Legislature Building Rotunda on November 13. The standard is positioned on the third floor west balustrade above the grand staircase.

Famous Five Portrait Unveiling
On December 1 Speaker Kowalski hosted the unveiling of portraits by Edmonton artist Alice Tyler of the women known as Alberta's Famous Five. In 1929 these women—Judge Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, and Henrietta Edwards—successfully challenged a clause in the British North America Act that barred women from being appointed to the Senate of Canada; the case hinged on the legal definition of the word "person." The portraits, located on the fifth floor of the Legislature at the entrance to the east wing, were loaned to the Office of the Speaker by Ms Tyler and Mr. William Deacon. Premier Ralph Klein, Speaker Kowalski, Community Development Minister Stan Woloshyn, Official Opposition Leader Nancy MacBeth, and New Democrat Leader Pam Barrett spoke during the ceremony. Mary LeMessurier, one of the first five Alberta women to serve in cabinet, also attended.

Employee Recognition Dinner
Speaker Kowalski hosted the annual staff recognition dinner on December 2 to mark the past year's accomplishments. Staff from Alberta constituency offices also attended this year. Awards were presented to staff with five, 10, 15, and 20 years of service.

Christmas at the Legislature
On December 2 Premier Klein and Speaker Kowalski brought greetings to begin the Legislature Building's annual Christmas festivities. Visitors to the grounds that evening enjoyed hot chocolate and shortbread in the Legislature Rotunda after Premier Klein turned on the outdoor Christmas lights for the season. Between December 2 and December 23 more than 15,000 people visited the Rotunda, enjoyed choir performances during the evening, and looked at the gingerbread houses and student-decorated Christmas trees in the pedway.

Former Opposition Leader Laurence Decore addressing the Assembly.

Former Members of the Legislative Assembly

Obituaries

Mr. Isidore Goresky
November 11, 1902, to February 22, 1999

Mr. Goresky was first elected on June 19, 1930, and served until August 22, 1935. He represented the constituency of Whitford for the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and was the last surviving Member of the UFA caucus. Mr. Goresky served on the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Colonization, Immigration and Education; Select Standing Committee on Municipal Law; Select Standing Committee on Private Bills; and the Select Standing Committee on Railways, Telephones and Irrigation.

Mr. Roy Davidson
February 15, 1906, to April 25, 1999

Mr. Davidson was elected in a by-election on January 20, 1964, and served until May 23, 1967. He represented the constituency of Three Hills for the Social Credit Party. Mr. Davidson served on the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; Select Standing Committee on Private Bills; and the Select Standing Committee on Public Affairs.

Mr. John (Jack) Butler
October 21, 1916, to November 4, 1999

Mr. Butler represented the constituency of Hanna-Oyen for the Progressive Conservative Party. He was elected on March 26, 1975, and served until March 14, 1979. Mr. Butler served on the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills; Select Standing Committee on Public Affairs; Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts; and the Special Committee - Ombudsman Act.

Mr. Laurence Decore
June 28, 1940, to November 6, 1999

Mr. Decore was first elected on March 20, 1989, and served until March 11, 1997. He represented the constituency of Edmonton-Glengarry for the Liberal Party. He was the party leader from October 8, 1988, to July 15, 1994, and leader of the Official Opposition after the 1993 election. He served on the Select Standing Committee on Law and Regulations; Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; and the Select Standing Committee on Public Affairs. Mr. Decore played a significant role in bringing about major changes in 1993 to the Standing Orders, the parliamentary rules followed in the Alberta Legislature, as well as other parliamentary reforms.

Legislative Assembly Office

Financial Statements - As at March 31, 1998

Legislative Assembly Office

Financial Statements - As at March 31, 1998

Auditor's Report

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Changes in Net Assets/Net Liabilities

Statement of Operations

Statement of Changes in Financial Position

Notes to the Financial Statements

Schedule 1 – Expenses Detailed by Object

Schedule 2 – Salary and Benefits Disclosure

AUDITOR GENERAL
Alberta

Auditor's Report

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

I have audited the statement of financial position of the Legislative Assembly Office as at March 31, 1998, and the statements of changes in net liabilities, operations, and changes in financial position for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Office's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

The Office has not recognized accrued vacation entitlements as a liability. The amount of the misstatement cannot be reasonably determined; however, I believe it to be material.

In my opinion, except for the effects of the Office's failure to record the liability referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office as at March 31, 1998, and the results of its operations and the changes in its financial position for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Peter Valentine

FCA
Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
December 9, 1999

Statement of Financial Position - As at March 31, 1998

Assets	1998	1997
Current Assets		
Cash	$ 1,550	$ 8,531
Accounts receivable and advances (Note 4)	688,929	308,658
Inventory held for resale	210,988	193,290
	901,467	510,479
Capital assets (Note 5)	358,593	228,975
	$ 1,260,060	**$ 739,454**
Liabilities and Net Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 6)	$ 787,016	$ 300,720
	787,016	300,720
Members' transition allowance liability (Note 7)	2,722,683	2,650,800
Long-term disability insurance liability (Note 8)	18,200	706,250
Pension liability (Note 9)	603,000	1,256,500
	3,343,883	4,613,550
Net liabilities	(2,870,839)	(4,174,816)
	$ 1,260,060	**$ 739,454**

The accompanying notes are part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Net Liabilities - Year ended March 31, 1998

	1998	1997
Net liabilities at beginning of year	$ (4,174,816)	$ (6,077,420)
Net operating results	(18,774,051)	(17,697,734)
Net transfer from general revenues	20,078,028	19,600,338
Net liabilities at end of year	**$ (2,870,839)**	**$ (4,174,816)**

Statement of Operations - Year ended March 31, 1998

		1998	1997
	BUDGET (Note 10)	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
Revenues			
Gift shop sales, services, and fees	$ 131,638	$ 156,238	$ 147,643
Contribution from Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services for accommodation provided at no charge		461,000	461,000
	131,638	**617,238**	**608,643**
Expenses			
Voted:			
Financial management and administrative services	326,811	302,808	328,000
House services	1,040,477	1,079,949	886,000
MLA administration	14,172,275	12,638,647	12,221,000
Office of the Speaker	260,970	280,160	180,000
Government members' services	1,842,335	1,221,325	1,044,000
Official Opposition services	1,115,126	1,115,837	1,568,000
New Democrat Opposition services	85,690	234,328	-
Legislative committees	159,045	105,688	41,000
Public Information Branch	1,364,523	1,236,045	1,041,000
Legislature Library	832,820	824,116	809,000
Information systems	814,699	886,753	776,000
Independent member's services	-	-	15,000
Human resources services	371,849	403,917	213,000
Electoral Boundaries Commission	-	-	117,000
	$ 22,386,620	**20,329,573**	**19,239,000**
Valuation adjustments (Note 11)			
Accommodation costs		461,000	461,000
Capitalization of assets expensed as supplies		(407,674)	(260,430)
Amortization of capital assets (Note 3 (b))		278,057	201,027
Provision for (reduction in) members' transitional allowance liability		71,883	(949,200)
Provision for (reduction in) long-term disability insurance liability (Note 8)		(688,050)	145,780
Provision for (reduction in) pension liability (Note 9)		(653,500)	(530,800)
		(938,284)	(932,623)
		19,391,289	18,306,377
Net operating results		**$ (18,774,051)**	**$ (17,697,734)**

Statement of Changes in Financial Position - Year ended March 31, 1998

	1998	1997
Operating transactions		
Net operating results	$ (18,774,051)	$ (17,697,734)
Add non-cash charges		
Amortization of capital assets	278,057	201,027
Increase (decrease) in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	486,296	(64,567)
Increase (decrease) in long-term disability insurance liability	(688,050)	145,780
Decrease in pension liability	(653,500)	(530,800)
Increase in accounts receivable and advances	(380,271)	(139,862)
Increase in inventory	(17,698)	(290)
Increase (decrease) in transitional allowance	71,883	(1,249,200)
Cash used by operating transactions	(19,677,334)	(19,335,646)
Investing transactions		
Acquisition of capital assets	(407,675)	(260,430)
Financing transactions		
Net transfer from general revenues	20,078,028	19,600,338
Net cash provided (used)	(6,981)	4,262
Cash, beginning of year	8,531	4,269
Cash, end of year	$ 1,550	$ 8,531

Notes to the Financial Statements - Year ended March 31, 1998

Note 1 Authority

The Legislative Assembly Office (the "Office") is operated under the authority of the Legislative Assembly Act. The net cost of the operations of the Office is borne by the general revenue fund of the Province of Alberta. Annual operating budgets are approved by the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

Note 2 Purpose

Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly:

1. Supports the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of the office.
2. Supports members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta.
3. Records the proceedings and maintains the records of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Informs and educates the public on behalf of members and the institution of parliament.
5. Supports the Assembly in protecting its institutions and privileges.
6. Supports the exchange of information and ideas among Legislatures.
7. Supports the Officers of the Legislature as required.

Note 3 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and Reporting Practices

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the following accounting policies:

a) Reporting Entity

The reporting entity is the Legislative Assembly Office, for which the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is responsible.

The Office operates within the general revenue fund (the "Fund"). The Fund is administrated by the Provincial Treasurer. All receipts of the Office are deposited into the Fund and all disbursements made by the Office are paid from the Fund.

b) Basis of Financial Reporting

Revenues

All revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting.

Expenses

Expenses represent the costs of resources consumed during the year on the Office's operations.

Pension expense included as part of the employer's share of employee benefits, or as a valuation adjustment to record the change in pension liability, comprises:

(i) the cost of pension benefits earned by employees during the year,
(ii) interest on the Office's share of the unfunded pension liability,
(iii) amortization of deferred adjustments over the expected average remaining service life of employees,
(iv) adjustments to the pension obligation in the event that there is reasonable assurance that a gain or loss has been realized, and
(v) the effect of the change in the ratio used to allocate the plan's total unfunded liability to participating entities.

Valuation Adjustments

Valuation adjustments include changes in the valuation allowances used to reflect financial assets and liabilities at their net recoverable or other appropriate value.

Assets

Financial assets of the Office are limited to financial claims such as advances to and receivables from other organizations, employers, and other individuals.

Inventory held for resale is reported at the lower of cost and net realizable value.

Amortization is calculated on a straight-line basis, over the estimated useful lives of the assets as follows:

Computer hardware and software	3 years

The Office follows government budgetary practices which allow funds from an operating budget to be used to purchase capital assets. These purchases are included in expenses on the statement of operations, but are then removed from expenses through a valuation adjustment and are capitalized and amortized over their useful lives.

Liabilities

Liabilities include all financial claims payable by the Office at fiscal year end, including long-term disability benefits and certain pension benefits.

Net Liabilities

Net liabilities represents the difference between the value of assets held by the Office and its liabilities.

Note 4 Accounts Receivable and Advances

The fair value of accounts receivable and advances are estimated to approximate their book values.

The Office is responsible for paying the remuneration of Members of the Legislative Assembly. A portion of the remuneration relates to allowances for service as a minister of a government department or on a committee that a particular ministry is responsible for. These payments are not expenses of the Office and are recovered from the appropriate government departments.

	1998	1997
Ministerial and committee remuneration recovery	$ 520,665	$ 266,014
GST receivable	90,710	-
Accountable advances	18,282	8,843
Other	59,272	33,801
Total	**$ 688,929**	**$ 308,658**

Note 5 Capital Assets

	1998			1997
	COST	ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION	NET BOOK VALUE	NET BOOK VALUE
Computer hardware and software	$ 834,170	$ 475,577	$ 358,593	$ 228,975
	$ 834,170	**$ 475,577**	**$ 358,593**	**$ 228,975**

Note 6 Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities

The fair values of accounts payable and accrued liabilities are estimated to approximate their book values.

Note 7 Members' Transitional Allowance

Effective during the 1997-98 fiscal period as per the Members' Allowances Order (RMSC 1992, c.M-1, as amended) section 9:

Where a Member resigns from office as a Member, or an ex-Member chooses not to contest or is not elected in an election immediately following a period of service as a Member, the Member or ex-Members shall receive a transitional allowance in the amount of one month's indemnity allowance and one month's expense allowance at the highest level attained multiplied by the years or part years of service as Member, whether continuously or in separate periods with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 years.

Note 8 Long-Term Disability Insurance Liability

The Office participates with government departments in long-term disability insurance. The Office's portion of this liability was based on the Office's percentage of the total salaries of all government departments in the plan. During the current year the Province paid approximately $102 million into the long-term disability insurance fund and, as a result, there was a significant reduction in the liability at March 31, 1998.

Note 9 Pension Liability

The Office participates with other employers in the Public Service Pension Plan and the Management Employees Pension Plan. These plans provide pensions for the Office's employees based on years of service and earnings. The Office had an unfunded pension liability for each plan as at March 31, which was estimated as follows:

	1998	1997
Public Service Pension Plan	$ 126,600	$ 251,300
Management Employees Pension Plan	476,400	1,005,200
	$ 603,000	**$ 1,256,500**

The total unfunded pension liability for each plan as at March 31, 1998, was determined by actuarial valuation as at December 31, 1995, for the Public Service Pension Plan and December 31, 1996, for the Management Employees Pension Plan, both extrapolated to March 31, 1998. The 1997, comparatives were determined by extrapolation to March 31, 1997, of actuarial valuations as at December 31, 1995 for the Public Service Pension Plan and as at December 31, 1994, for the Management Employees Pension Plan.

The actuarial valuations were determined using the projected benefit method prorated on service. Assumptions used in the valuation are based on each Pension Board's best estimate of future events. Each plan's future experience will inevitably vary, perhaps significantly, from the assumptions. Any differences between the actuarial assumptions and future experience will emerge as gains or losses in future valuations. Gains and losses which relate to the long-term are amortized over the expected average remaining service life of the employee group. Gains and losses for which there is reasonable assurance regarding their measurement and realization are recognized as income immediately.

The *Public Sector Pension Plans Act* specifies the basis to determine the amount of the total liability for each plan which will be funded by employers. The Office's portion of these employers' liabilities was based on the Office's percentage of the total pensionable payroll of all employers in the Plans.

Note 10 Budget

Expenses	
1997-98 budget[a]	$ 22,386,620
Voted supplementary[b]	-
1997-98 authorized budget	22,386,620
1997-98 actual expenses (excluding validation adjustments)	(20,329,573)
1997-98 unexpended (excluding validation adjustments)	**$ 2,057,047**

[a] Legislative Assembly Estimates released on April 21, 1997.

[b] Supplementary Estimates released on March 17, 1998.

New Democrat Opposition services budget had $148,343 transferred to it from the MLA administration budget as per the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services (April 30, 1997); this occurred after the Legislative Assembly Estimates were tabled in the Legislature.

Note 11 Valuation Adjustments

Valuation adjustments include changes in the valuation allowances used to reflect assets and liabilities at their appropriate value.

Note 12 Uncertainty Due to Year 2000

The year 2000 issue is the result of some computer programs being written using two digits rather than four to define the applicable year. Computer programs that have date sensitive software may recognize a date of "00" as the year 1900 rather than the year 2000 which could result in miscalculations or system failures. In addition, similar problems may arise in some systems if certain dates in 1999 are not recognized as a valid date or are recognized to represent something other than a date. The effects of the year 2000 issue may be experienced before, on, or after January 1, 2000.

The Office is currently working to resolve the potential effect of the year 2000 on the processing of date sensitive information by the Office's computerized information systems in a timely manner. The costs of addressing potential problems by modifying, replacing, or retiring significant portions of computerized information systems are not expected to have a materially adverse effect on the Office's financial condition. Despite the Office's efforts to address this issue, it is not possible to be certain that all aspects of the year 2000 problem affecting the Office, including those related to the efforts of customers, suppliers, and other third parties, will be fully resolved.

Note 13 Approval of Financial Statements

These financial statements were approved by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Schedule 1

Expenses Detailed by Object - Year ended March 31, 1998

	1998		1997
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
Expenses			
Salaries, wages and employer contributions			
Legislative Assembly Office staff (Schedule 2)	$ -	$ 3,351,262	$ 2,930,276
Constituency Office, caucus, and other staff	-	4,661,428	4,345,724
	8,270,287	8,012,690	7,276,000
Supplies and services	6,522,801	6,110,033	5,529,000
Grants	2,560	1,700	2,000
Payments to MLAs and Executive Council	7,590,972	6,205,150	6,432,000
Total Expenses	**$ 22,386,620**	**$ 20,329,573**	**$19,239,000**

Schedule 2

Salary and Benefits Disclosure - Year ended March 31, 1998

			1998	1997
	SALARY[1]	BENEFITS & ALLOWANCES[2]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Senior Official				
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly [3]	$ 93,832 [4]	$ 13,855	$ 107,687	$ 102,372
Senior Management Team				
Senior Financial Officer	69,508	12,460	81,968	
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	70,433 [4]	12,249	82,682	
Parliamentary Counsel	58,112	11,069	69,181	
Director, Public Information Branch	59,136	11,194	70,330	
Director, Human Resource Services	60,568 [4]	11,089	71,657	
Legislature Librarian	60,970 [4]	11,454	72,424	
Assistant Legislature Librarian	53,953	10,560	64,513	
Clerk Assistant	57,921 [4]	10,803	68,724	
Sergeant-At-Arms	51,885	10,307	62,192	
Manager, Financial Management and Administrative Services	44,111	8,561	52,672	
Other managers	96,527	13,744	110,271	
Manager Subtotal	$ 683,124	$ 123,490	$ 806,614	$ 691,002
Other salaried staff	1,534,040	239,698	1,773,738	1,679,081
Nonsalaried staff [5]	626,038	37,185	663,223	457,821
	$ 2,937,034	**$ 414,228**	**$ 3,351,262**	**$ 2,930,276**

(1) Salary includes regular base pay, bonuses, overtime, lump sum payments, and any other direct cash remuneration.

(2) The Legislative Assembly Office's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, health care, dental coverage, group life insurance, and short and long-term disability plans.

(3) Automobile is provided but not included in benefit calculations.

(4) Includes vacation payout.

(5) Non-salaried staff includes all wage staff and others remunerated on an hourly basis with the exception of salaries and benefits paid under the STEP program.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - Alberta Branch

1999 Annual Report

A parliamentary delegation from Russia visited Alberta in 1999.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Overview

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an association of members of Commonwealth parliaments who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Canada was one of the six original member countries of the CPA when it was formed in 1911 under the name of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Association branches now exist in 134 national, state, provincial, and territorial parliaments with a total membership of over 14,000 parliamentarians. Each provincial and territorial Legislative Assembly in Canada as well as the federal Parliament comprises a branch of the CPA. All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are members of the Alberta branch of the CPA.

President's Report

Speaker Ken Kowalski, President of the Alberta Branch of the CPA

In 1999 the Alberta branch of the CPA moved one step closer to my goal of having all private members of the Legislative Assembly participate in at least one interparliamentary conference or exchange during the term of the 24th Legislature. All MLAs who have participated so far have benefited considerably from the experience. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries of these MLAs' experiences are the people of Alberta who, in the long run, will be better represented and the parliamentary process, which will be able to evolve to better suit the ever-changing demands of society in the new century.

As one of the following MLA reports notes, all of us parliamentarians obtained our positions by selling ourselves to our constituents; none of us became MLAs by graduating from a training program. The need for MLAs to have professional development should therefore be obvious. The primary way to meet that need is through the CPA and other related interparliamentary functions. These experiences enable members to share experiences and points of view with their counterparts across Canada and around the world. The nonpartisan environment affords everyone involved an opportunity for open sharing and engenders a collaborative approach to issues and parliamentary processes that can rarely be achieved in any other forum.

Even after being an MLA for 20 years, I am continually learning how to be a more effective member whenever I participate in interparliamentary functions. In addition to CPA conferences, in 1999 I had the privilege to participate in Alberta's first delegation to Germany under the Partnership of Parliaments program. Alberta hosted a group of German parliamentarians in 1998, and in 1999 it was Alberta's turn to send a delegation there. I witnessed the work of a nation still trying to reintegrate itself after over 50 years of division into east and west. I saw how despite our differences in language, history, geography, and population density I could apply to my work the insights and experiences of our German counterparts. Even though German democratic institutions did not develop along the lines of the British model followed in the

Commonwealth, the differences between our two traditions helped me appreciate the best features of both systems and enabled me to think about how ours can be improved.

I also was honoured in 1999 with an invitation to attend the National Speakers Conference in San Antonio, Texas. A Speaker from Germany and I were the only two participants from outside the United States. Alberta has nurtured connections with the United States in various ways over the last many years, primarily in order to enhance our economic links with our most important trading partner. My experience at this conference underlined the importance of understanding the legislative and social issues in the United States and maintaining contact with our counterparts there.

All Albertans should be proud of the leading role Alberta continues to play in interparliamentary relations through the work not only of Alberta MLAs but of support staff as well.

Secretary's Report

W.J. David McNeil, Secretary of the Alberta Branch of the CPA and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

The Alberta branch participated in 13 interparliamentary activities in 1999, three of which were with countries outside the Commonwealth. This was Alberta's first opportunity to send a delegation to Germany as part of the Partnership of Parliaments program, after having hosted a group of German parliamentarians in 1998. Alberta's commitment to this program will involve hosting German guests in even-numbered years and sending a delegation to Germany in odd-numbered years.

Alberta's connection with the francophone parliamentary association Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) grew closer in 1999 to the point that the association expressed interest in having its international conference in Alberta in 2001.

Staff of the Legislative Assembly Office provided excellent support to Alberta MLAs participating in interparliamentary functions. Staff also represented Alberta well in interparliamentary activities at the staff level. They collaborated with each other and with their counterparts in other jurisdictions to share knowledge and expertise and develop contacts from which all participating parliaments are sure to benefit.

I was pleased to be asked by the CPA to coordinate the development of the first of a series of training modules for Commonwealth parliamentarians. This module, entitled Fundamentals of Parliamentary Democracy, is being developed in co-operation with Athabasca University, the Commonwealth of Learning and the CPA.

I was privileged to support members in their attendance at the National Conference of State Legislators in Indianapolis and the CPA Canadian Regional Conference in Quebec.

16th Canadian Presiding Officers' Conference

Ottawa, Ontario, January 7 - 10, 1999

Agenda

1 Role of Parliaments and Parliamentarians in 21st Century Governance
2 The Changing Demographics of Parliamentary Assemblies
3 Ensuring Order and Decorum
4 The Casting Vote
5 Agreements to be Ratified by Legislatures: Case Study of the Nisga'a Treaty

Alberta Delegation

The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker
Mr. Don Tannas, Deputy Speaker
Dr. W.J. David McNeil, Clerk

Biennial Conference of Australasian Council of Public Accounts

Perth, Australia, February 21 - 23, 1999

Agenda

1 Competitive Tendering and Contracting Out
2 Commercial Confidentiality
3 Corporate Law Economic Reform Legislation: Review of Accounting Standards Setting in Australia
4 Public Accounts Committees: A Canadian Perspective
5 Compliance Auditing and Reporting by Auditors General
6 Year 2000 Problem: Millennium Bug
7 The Funding and Administration of Community Service Obligations/Universal Service Obligations
8 The Cost of Accountability: Getting the Balance Right
9 Audit Legislation: Trends in Australia
10 Proposal for an International Organization of Public Accounts Committees
11 Constitution of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees

Alberta Delegation

Mr. Shiraz Shariff, MLA

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

Conference attendees included Australasian Council of Public Accounts (ACPAC) delegates and Auditors General of the Australian states, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and Papua New Guinea. International observers representing Canada, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom also attended.

My impression of the conference was very positive. Tremendous learning occurred from sharing experiences. In particular, this forum provided an excellent opportunity to work with Auditors General identifying areas of improvement. I highly recommend that Alberta continue to participate in such conferences.

– Shiraz Shariff

Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie Régional Amérique Section Presidents and Regional Mission 1999

Lafayette and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February 27 - March 4, 1999

Alberta Delegation
Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

I found the meetings to be very informative and a good opportunity to discuss matters of interest with other participants. The purpose of these missions is to make Francophone and Anglophone parliamentarians from American parliaments aware of the existence of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) as well as its goals and achievements.

In having a mission at Lafayette and Baton Rouge, the group wanted to portray the interest and the solidarity that the American region has with the Louisiana branch, to reinforce our ties with the branch, and to promote its participation within the APF and French-speaking countries. The group also wanted to familiarize and promote the APF to parliamentary Francophones, Francophiles, and Anglophones from Louisiana, expand the range of the American region beyond its parliamentary scope, and strengthen the links between Francophone communities in Louisiana in order to promote the French language and culture in America.

The parliamentarians were also able to share thoughts and ideas with other members of the Louisiana community, and after the conference we met with Louisiana parliamentarians and assisted with parliamentary committee work.

– Paul Langevin

Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Meeting

Edmonton, Alberta, June 20 - 22, 1999

Agenda

1 Working groups on topics including recycling, tourism, private-sector initiatives, environment and agriculture, forest products, and transportation
2 Canada/U.S. Border: Bridge or Wall?
3 PNWER in the 21st Century

Alberta Delegation
Mr. David Coutts, MLA
Ms Karen Leibovici, MLA

International Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) American Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

25th Plenary Session, Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

XVI Ordinary Session, Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Ottawa, Ontario, July 4 - 11, 1999

Alberta Delegation
Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA, President of the Alberta Section
Mr. Wayne Cao, MLA
Mr. Denis Ducharme, MLA
Ms Karen Leibovici, MLA
Mrs. Louise Kamuchik, Administrative Secretary to the Section

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

This was my first opportunity to witness international debate, and I found it quite interesting. The APF international membership held a plenary session prior to the APF Régional Amérique Conference. As an observer I attended the political session. APF membership fees, problems concerning delinquent membership fees, and requests for APF delegations to assist and participate in democratic reform in some African countries were discussed and debated.

As a member of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie Région Amérique our Alberta delegation participated in discussions and debate regarding the use of technology in the roles of parliamentarians and the expansion of French language services in all provinces within Canada.

All in all, both conferences were very informative and interesting.

– Denis Ducharme

Delegations from 30 countries attended this conference, and it was very interesting to meet so many new people. Since my name is Wayne Cao on the list of delegates representing Canada, other delegates asked if I was of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean roots. I joked in French that I was of native North American Indian roots. But when talking to Vietnam delegates, to their surprise I quickly switched to the Vietnamese language, telling them that I was born in Vietnam and that in 1954 our family clan avoided the Communists from North Vietnam and moved from South Vietnam for the same reason at the end of the Vietnam war.

On the resolution to use the information highway to connect parliaments around the world, I expressed my support and encouraged its usage. I also voiced that there are countries where the governments have a monopoly on the telecom system and do not trust free flow of information, internally and externally.

During the social part of the conference we were well treated with receptions by Canadian ministers, the Speaker of the House, the Speaker of the Senate, and ambassadors of different nations.

It was very educational for me to learn about the problems of other nations and to meet with people from many places. I promoted the Alberta economic climate to other delegates by pointing out our Alberta initiatives.

– Wayne Cao

25th Plenary Session

This was the first APF plenary session held in Canada since Alberta became a member of the organization in 1998. Alberta delegates attending the conference gained much insight into events occurring in a number of countries that have French as their spoken language. Over 175 representatives from 35 Francophone countries and provinces from Europe, Africa, Vietnam, Haiti, and Canada were in attendance.

Topics of discussion included the Moncton summit to be held in September and its perspective on youth. The election of the new executive was announced with Nicholas Amougou Noma, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of Cameroon, becoming President of the APF and

Jean Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec, appointed first vice-president. The Parliamentary Women of Francophonie discussed the difficulties encountered by women attempting to penetrate the political sphere in their jurisdictions.

XVI Ordinary Session

The opening session began with Dr. Bernard Patry, MP and president of the Canadian section, offering words of welcome to the 60 delegates. A business session entitled Is Our Youth Healthy? heard presentations from Senator Losier-Cool and Jean-François Simard, while the theme for the afternoon session was The Adaptation of the Inforoute to Francophonie and its Utility to Parliamentarians in America.

The two guest experts, Suzanne Richer, director general, International Information Bank on Francophone States and Pierre C. Belangr, news director, French Radio, Radio-Canada, participated in an interesting exchange with delegates on the use of the Internet by elected officials and members of the public. Delegates also informed their colleagues of the level of services in their respective jurisdictions.

The opportunity to meet new friends, renew acquaintances, and enjoy a healthy exchange of information with delegates of similar backgrounds while discovering an interesting number of differences will be of benefit to all Members of the Legislative Assembly who were fortunate enough to attend this worthwhile conference.

– Paul Langevin

Partnership of Parliaments

Germany, July 10 - 25, 1999

Alberta Delegation
The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker
Mr. Rob Renner, MLA
Mr. Tom Thurber, MLA

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

I was pleased to have been invited to participate in the second half of a reciprocal parliamentary exchange between Canada and Germany. The Partnership of Parliaments is a longstanding program between the U.S. and Germany, and its success led to an expansion of the program to include Canadian legislators.

I was impressed with the obvious thought that was put into creating our itinerary. Beginning and ending in the cosmopolitan cities of Berlin and Hamburg, the group was exposed to as broad a spectrum as could be accommodated in the time available. The bulk of the time was spent in discussion with a mix of private-sector, public-sector, and academic representatives.

The delegation had an opportunity to understand and reflect upon the tremendous implications related to the unification of the former East Germany with West Germany. Focusing not only on growth and economic expansion, we also viewed and discussed the social and financial pressures posed by attempting to assimilate a region that in many ways had been in a time warp for 50 years.

Geographically Germany is about one-third the size of Alberta. With a total population almost three times that of Canada, one could come to the conclusion that we would have little in common, but issues related to government and politics seem to be almost universal.

Technology is shrinking our world daily, and we are rapidly moving to a worldwide economy. If society expects its elected leaders to make critical policy decisions, it is wise to provide them with a better understanding of the global political and economic environments. Organizations such as the Partnership of Parliaments provide a valuable tool in assisting politicians to gain such knowledge and insight.

– Rob Renner

National Conference of State Legislators

Indianapolis, Indiana, July 24 - 28, 1999

Agenda

1 The Legislative Institution
2 Oversight and Performance Evaluation
3 U.S. Foreign Relations
4 Women Legislators: World Leaders Weaving the Global and Domestic Agenda
5 International Fiscal Federalism and Devolution
6 U.S./European Trade Relations: We Have No Bananas Today
7 The Digital Economy, the Internet, and State Taxation
8 Africa Roundtable Discussion

Alberta Delegation
Mrs. Judy Gordon, MLA
Mr. Hugh MacDonald, MLA

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

I had the pleasure of representing the Legislative Assembly and the province of Alberta as a member of the international delegation at this conference.

Many interesting issues were on the conference agenda. I found the policy discussions very informative, particularly the programs on long-term care, medicare reform, growth management and healthy cities, global climate change, the genetic revolution and how it affects agriculture, privatizing public education, and demographics and its impact on health care.

My family also attended the conference, and the programs available to them were excellent.

– Hugh MacDonald

It was my first opportunity to attend such a large function stateside, and I was duly impressed with the calibre and variety of the business sessions.

I attended numerous sessions, including one on the impacts of gambling and several on health reform. As Americans, like Canadians, are getting older and more racially and ethnically diverse, it was felt that failing to address these changing health needs could result in far-reaching economic and social ramifications. I also participated in a roundtable session on Fiscal Federalism and Devolution, where I discussed the fiscal relationship between the federal and provincial governments in Canada.

Many issues facing American legislatures are the same ones we as lawmakers face in our own country and province. I have no doubt we can well learn from each other, and it can only prove to be beneficial to send delegates to future conferences like this one.

– Judy Gordon

38th Canadian Regional CPA Conference

Quebec City, Quebec, August 7 - 13, 1999

Agenda

1 Parliamentary Diplomacy
2 The Parliamentary Conference of the Americas and Legislative Assemblies of Canada
3 The Role of Parliamentarians in the Defense of Large Canadian Industries on the International Scene
4 The Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
5 The Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Still Appropriate?
6 The Role and Place of Independent Members
7 Is the Party Line a Necessary Evil?
8 The Financing of Political Parties

Alberta Delegation

Mr. Don Tannas, MLA
Mr. Ron Stevens, MLA
Mr. Richard Marz, MLA
Mr. Julius Yankowsky, MLA
Mrs. Linda Sloan, MLA
Mr. Ed Gibbons, MLA
Dr. W.J. David McNeil, Clerk
Mrs. Susan Purdie, Special Assistant to the Speaker

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

Quebec City was a beautiful and historic setting for this conference. Representatives from across Canada attended, and representatives from other countries including the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia, and Puerto Rico were observers. The experience and knowledge one can gain in meeting with other elected representatives are overwhelming.

The conference began with a session on parliamentary diplomacy. A variety of issues were discussed including globalization, NAFTA, responsibilities of opposition party leaders, and credibility of representatives of all levels of government.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly and our fantastic conference host, delivered a persistent message that the province of Quebec should be recognized as a distinct government. I enjoyed many interesting conversations and debates about the affairs of Quebec with representatives of that province.

In other sessions throughout the week delegates discussed the parliamentary process, information exchanges, embassy networking, agriculture, and concerns leading up to the World Trade Organization conference. They also expressed concerns about specific issues relating to their own provinces.

The province of Quebec and Quebec City did an outstanding job in hosting all delegates.

– Ed Gibbons

I would first observe that the Canadian CPA members reaffirmed last year's decision not to have the CPA become a body making policy decisions. The Canadian CPA will remain a nonpartisan professional development and improvement association of elected representatives.

Speaker Charbonneau of the Quebec National Assembly was the first presenter on the topic of parliamentary diplomacy. While I thought he would dwell on the issue of diplomacy in our interactions with fellow members of our own Legislatures or with members of other Legislatures, he actually presented a point of view that dealt with a parallel diplomacy to governments' foreign affairs or intergovernmental departments. He advocated that interparliamentary gatherings should deal with international issues and that as elected members we should not leave diplomacy only to the civil servants.

The second session on the topic Parliamentary Conference of the Americas and the Canadian Legislative Assemblies was also presented by Speaker Charbonneau. The third session dealt with the role of parliamentarians in defence of Canada's major industries.

Mr. Arthur Donahoe gave an informative presentation on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and Alberta's Linda Sloan gave a thought-provoking presentation on Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Appropriate?

I enjoyed the conference, and it was very worth while.

– Don Tannas

This conference was aptly described by an habitual attendee as professional development for the parliamentarian. Parliamentarians do not qualify for the position by attending school; rather, they are elected to it. So this event brings together members from all provinces, territories, the federal government, and some Commonwealth countries to discuss, both formally and informally, their experiences and issues.

Formal sessions were held in the National Assembly Chamber. A wide range of topics, from the parochial Quebec issue of parliamentary diplomacy to the broad-based financing of political parties, was discussed. This group of parliamentarians was by no means homogeneous. They shared opinions freely, with passion, and without incident, as all members appeared to come to the conference with a full reserve of bonhomie.

The Quebec members were superb hosts, and all in all this was a most wonderful experience.

– Ron Stevens

I was pleased to be a member of the all-party delegation attending this conference. As a first-term parliamentarian, meeting elected officials from the 10 provinces, the territories, the House of Commons, and the many senators and international delegates who attended was a great privilege.

The conference gave me an opportunity to meet and speak with Quebec parliamentarians as well as citizens in and around that region. I found this experience particularly enlightening. I have gained valuable insight into the issues of importance to the Quebecois, and their concerns were remarkably similar to those I hear throughout my constituency.

This conference stressed the importance of interparliamentary co-operation and how that co-operation can help us as elected members do our jobs better. Not only can we learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions, we can be examples to developing democracies around the world. Our challenge is to take advantage of this opportunity.

– Richard Marz

I found all sessions to be informative, thought-provoking, and useful to me as a parliamentarian. Presentations addressed the role of parliamentarians in defence of Canada's major industries, the role of independent members, party discipline, and the financing of political parties. All were interesting and well prepared. I found that the discussions following the presentations revealed information about other provinces' and jurisdictions' similarities and differences, which was quite fascinating.

From a parent perspective I was most impressed by the program co-ordinators who ensured that I was aware of what the day's activities would entail and how my 11-year-old daughter, Sarah, would be supervised. A credit to their personable and engaging approach was that Sarah, initially reluctant to participate, made five new friends during the week and returned home speaking very positively of the program and her first visit to Quebec City.

– Linda Sloan

The Canadian Regional CPA conferences are a place for federal, provincial, territorial, and some foreign political representatives to come together on a friendly basis and discuss issues common to all. The topics chosen for the 38th conference business sessions certainly bore this out, generating lively discussion and debate both inside and outside of the Quebec Parliament Chamber where the sessions were held.

A personal highlight for me was being chosen to chair the third business session, The Role of Parliamentarians in the Defense of Canada's Major Industries Under Attack on the International Scene.

The conference was exciting and invigorating from the opening ceremony to the closing banquet. In closing, I want to comment on how well it was organized. The receptions, tours, and events for spouses and families were very well planned, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly, and his wife, Mme Anne-Marie Desmarais, are to be commended for being such gracious hosts.

– Julius Yankowsky

Summary of Alberta Presentation

Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Appropriate? by Linda Sloan (with contributions by Thomas Borreson, political science student at the University of Lethbridge)

In 1997 the Alberta government co-ordinated the Alberta growth summit. The fundamental question posed to participants and delegates was: in the context of where we want to be in the year 2005, what private- and public-sector actions and policies are needed to ensure sustainable and broad-based growth in Alberta?

The summit concluded with priorities for action being identified under the categories of people development, health and quality of life, vision of the province, infrastructure, regulatory and tax issues, role and function of government, partnerships, and framework for policy development and management. Concluding the event, Premier Klein committed to outline the government's response and a vision for the province. The Premier mused that he would like to see a response card developed to track follow-up actions, but this has not occurred.

While such an event might appear to most as a measure of Alberta's democratic state, closer examination of other parliamentary measures would suggest that parliamentary democracy in Alberta is not being sustained but eroded in the context of summits, unelected appointments, and government practices.

The fall sittings of the Legislature in 1997 were replaced by the growth summit. Policy is being made more and more by government-appointed boards. Meanwhile, the Legislature of Alberta is sitting less and less. It sat for only 38 days in 1996-'97 – a stark contrast to Ontario, where the Legislature sat for 134 days over the same period.

Meanwhile, on a national scale it is important to examine the impact of the social union negotiated between the provinces and Ottawa, as well as the North American free trade agreement and the multilateral agreement on investment.

Canadians are bombarded with notions that Canada must adapt in order to remain globally competitive, and this includes changing how Canada is governed. Under this unyielding influence the strength of the Canadian parliamentary system wanes, to the point where recent governments have afforded special rights to these artificial entities which can prevent them from addressing the concerns of actual people.

Is the Canadian parliamentary system an appropriate model for the next century? In its present form it appears to be hamstrung and steadily withering. The corporate powers have considerable financial clout and an ever increasing amount of rights once reserved for human beings. Their power has been more than sufficient to undermine democracy in other nations, creating a de facto command economy in various developing regions.

Perhaps the question is not simply whether or not the Canadian parliamentary system is appropriate but which values Canada wishes to represent in its political system.

20th Annual Joint Canadian Conference of Legislative Auditors (CCOLA) and the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC)

Quebec City, Quebec, August 29 - 31, 1999

1 Roundtable reports from delegations
2 International Public Accounts Committees
3 Subcommittees on Guidelines and International Standards Concerning the Financial Statements of Public Sector of Standing Committee on Public Accounts, House of Commons
4 Value-for-money Auditing in Canada and Quebec Governments
5 Managing the Cost of Drug Therapies and Fostering Appropriate Drug Use in British Columbia
6 User Fees for Public Services
7 The John J. Kelly Forum on Relationships Between Public Accounts Committees and Auditors General

Alberta Delegation
Mr. Lance White, MLA, Chairman
Mrs. Mary O'Neill, MLA

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

The CCPAC conference was attended by parliamentarians, researchers, and committee clerks from the Canadian House of Commons and the provinces. The group was pleased to have the chairman of the Nunavut Territory Public Accounts Committee and two staff members in attendance. International observers from Bermuda, Tasmania, and western Australia also participated. It is interesting to note the involvement of other Commonwealth nations in the CCPAC process.

Also interesting is the extent to which public accounts committees in Canada can be proactive in ensuring that administration and implementation of policies are carried out in a prudent manner. This fact was corroborated by the survey discussed during the joint session between public accounts committee members and legislative auditors.

– Lance White

I thought the conference was valuable for its national and even international connections. I am convinced that every public accounts committee member in their respective jurisdictions is striving to give the best service in scrutinizing the public accounts for their regions, and the conference confirmed that opinion. The setting and the venues, coupled with the timing and pace of the conference, in Quebec City were excellent.

– Mary O'Neill

Assemblée Parliamentaire de la Francophonie

Antananarivo, Madagascar, October 19 - 21, 1999

Alberta Delegation
Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA

Theme: Parliament in the Year 2000

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

The purpose of the conference was to help improve democracy in that part of the world. This was done by sharing our experiences.

Along with parliamentarians from Quebec, Belgium, Mali, and Benin, I made presentations to approximately 60 elected officials and held working sessions. Those who attended appreciated our help and viewed the conference as a great success.

It was a great experience, and I am pleased to have had the opportunity.

– Paul Langevin

Executive Summary of Alberta Presentation (translation from French)

Mr. Langevin gave an information presentation outlining the roles and rights of Members of the Legislative Assembly in Alberta. He explained the differences between government MLAs sitting as members of cabinet and those sitting as backbenchers and the members of the opposition parties, and he indicated that the job of the MLA in Alberta has now evolved to become a full-time position from being essentially part-time prior to 1970.

His presentation touched on such topics as the role of the MLA in caucus, the responsibilities of MLAs both to their constituents and to the Assembly, and also with respect to party discipline and voting. He addressed the role of bills, resolutions, and motions as means of addressing and responding to constituents' needs and concerns. Further, he spoke about the role of the Official Opposition in Alberta's Legislature vis-á-vis critiquing potential legislation and government expenditures, their participation on the standing committees of the Assembly, and the formation of the "shadow cabinet" to scrutinize the operations and spending of specific departments of government.

Mr. Langevin detailed the rights and privileges of MLAs in Alberta, noting two essential privileges: freedom of expression and protection from arrest. He explained that freedom of expression permits the MLA to speak his mind within the Assembly without fear of prosecution and that the other privilege, protection from arrest, dates from the early days of British parliamentary democracy and was designed to ensure that a member could not be detained from carrying out his parliamentary duties.

In conclusion, he indicated that while Legislatures have changed little as far as the process of enacting and changing legislation, our society has changed a great deal, passing from the industrial age to the information age. In the new millennium issues such as globalization, the desire for transparent and responsible government, increased demand on services, and citizens wishing more direct involvement in democracy will pose challenges to all parliaments. As his closing observation, Mr. Langevin noted that future parliaments and legislators must possess a more in-depth knowledge and make the most of their capacity to obtain and evaluate the data originating from the many new information sources.

State Legislative Leaders Foundation (SLLF) National Speakers' Conference

San Antonio, Texas, October 20 - 24, 1999

1 Judicial System and the Parliamentary System
2 Politics and the Media
3 Roundtable discussions
4 Private Economists Constituency presentation

Alberta Delegation
The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker
Ms Bev Alenius, Executive Assistant to the Speaker

22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Seminar

St. John's, Newfoundland, October 21-24, 1999

1 Role of Committees: Future Effectiveness in Parliament
2 The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
3 Information Technology in Legislatures: Present Reality and Future Prospects
4 Question Period: How is it Handled by Speakers?
5 The Balance Between the Legislature and the Executive
6 Presentation on Confederation
7 Parliament/Media Relations
The Parliamentary Image: How Can It Be Improved?
8 Forestry

Alberta Delegation
Mr. Denis Herard, MLA
Mrs. Colleen Soetaert, MLA

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

I attended several sessions, including one on Confederation, and my colleague's presentation on parliamentary media relations. The session on Confederation was a great history lesson that crystallized an understanding of the heart and soul of Newfoundlanders and provided a new perspective on current issues as they relate to separatism in Quebec.

The session on media relations was perhaps the liveliest, with Colleen Soetaert's humourous paper on how to prepare for media interviews, followed by a debate on all aspects of media relations and the perception of voters.

– Denis Herard

As this was my first time as a participant at a CPA seminar, I found it to be informative and enjoyable. It is great to see how other parliaments work, to see where, in my opinion, Alberta's Legislature is ahead, the technology, and where we are behind, the role of committees.

The question period session was most interesting. In some jurisdictions government backbenchers do not get to ask any questions. In B.C. question period is only 15 minutes long.

All in all, it was a very informative weekend hosted by the gracious people of Newfoundland, most notably the Speaker and his wife. What I learned in Newfoundland was very valuable, but it was getting to know the people of Newfoundland that was most valuable. My intent is to return to Newfoundland with my family someday so that they, too, may benefit from knowing more about the rest of Canada.

– Colleen Soetaert

Summary of Alberta Presentation

Parliamentarians and the Press by Colleen Soetaert

Everyone has a horror story to tell about being misquoted in the press, but in reality the press is absolutely essential to our jobs. I always get distressed when I hear people in politics talking about the press as if they are snakes. We need them. The public needs them. They are the conduit to the masses. How else does the public get information? How do we get our message out? Whether the message is about a good move government has made or the opposition pointing out the government's shortcomings, we need to work with the press.

It is interesting how some politicians want to be in the news and others would just as soon not. I was chatting with a minister one day and he said to me, "A good day is when I'm not in the press," but for opposition a good day is if you are in the paper, even if it is the last line of the last paragraph.

I have found that the small community papers love news and look for it. If you have a credible issue you will get covered, and local papers tend to be read cover to cover, unlike some of the bigger papers.

I know many of the reporters fairly well, but I never say anything to them that I don't want to read about the next day. They have a job to do, and if you are talking to them and it is newsworthy, they have an obligation to report it. Half the time you end up giving an interview with no prior notice, and it is important not to get caught off guard. You have the right to say, "Let me do a little homework, and I'll get back to you."

Most of all, be yourself. Thousands of people voted for you, and when you get into the news in a positive way, it reaffirms that they were correct in choosing you to speak for them.

21st Annual Conference, Council on Governmental Ethics Laws

Providence, Rhode Island, December 5 - 8, 1999

1 The Importance of Public Access to Government Information
2 A Generation of Reform–How Much Progress?
3 Public/Private Partnerships: Recognizing and Avoiding Bad Deals
4 Instilling the Public Value of Open Government
5 Ethics in Government–A Personal Perspective
6 How to Develop a Useful and Effective Web Site
7 Ethics Update
8 Analysis of Campaign Fin nce Reform in the United Kingdom and Implications for the United States
9 What the World Expects in Freedom of Information
10 Creating a Positive Image for a Watchdog Agency
11 Nuts and Bolts I: Effective Use of Subpoenas
12 Election Administration: U.S. and Canadian Perspectives
13 Information Use and Privacy in the Health Care Industry
14 Managing Public Access Reports
15 Watchdog Agencies from Board Members' Perspectives
16 Independent Expenditures and Third Party Advocacy
17 Freedom of Information Update
18 Truth in Polls
19 Electronic Filing Update
20 Affecting Political Culture and Government Institutions From the Outside In
21 Nuts and Bolts II: Drafting Advisory Opinions
22 Identifying and Combating Voter Fraud
23 Mock Commission Meeting
24 Public Finance of Campaigns
25 Lobbying Update
26 Conducting an Effective Compliance Audit
27 A Consumer's View of Ethics Laws
28 How Minnesota's Campaign Laws Helped Elect a Third Party Governor
29 Oceans of Data: Keeping Government Open in the Age of the Internet

Alberta Delegation
Bob Clark, Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner
Paul Langevin, MLA
Frank Work, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
Karen South, Office of the Ethics Commissioner
Brian Fjeldheim, Chief Electoral Officer
Diane Shumyla, Committee Clerk

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

The conference focused on information and privacy, ethics, and election and government reform issues. Topics such as the importance of public access to government information, recognizing and avoiding bad deals in public/private partnerships, and election campaign finance were addressed.

The session on Instilling the Public Value of Open Government led to a discussion of freedom of information laws and how such laws are based on a recognition and acknowledgement on the part of government; that while openness and transparency are necessary parts of the accountability framework for public administration, at some point governments invariably begin to question the value of the law.

Debate also focused on the roles and responsibilities of board members of watchdog agencies by commission chairs who have various enforcement powers, discussing the relationship and interaction between members, their appointing authorities, staff, constituencies, the public, and the press.

The topic Affecting Political Culture and Government Institutions from the Outside was discussed as successful government reform efforts begin from outside the institutions of government.

The session also explored the efforts of private advocacy groups to achieve reform on issues including campaign finance, lobbying, ethics, and public access to information. Public participation processes were discussed with emphasis on how and why groups outside government affect and interact with existing watchdog agencies.

– Paul Langevin

Bursaries

Bursaries are presented annually to nominees from Tuxis Parliament of Alberta and the Alberta Girls' Parliament to increase interest in the parliament process among young Albertans. On May 4 Speaker Kowalski awarded bursaries to Jill Delarue from Tuxis and to Kristy Bruce and Jessica Schaink from the Alberta Girls' Parliament.

Grade 6 Essay Contest

A provincewide essay contest is held annually for grade 6 students to encourage greater awareness of the Commonwealth and the parliamentary system. This year the grand prize went to Jacqueline Kennedy.

(Left to right) Her Honour Mrs. Lucille Olson, His Honour the Honourable H. A. "Bud" Olson, former Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General, His Excellency John Ralston Saul, and Speaker Kowalski.

Interparliamentary Relations

The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairman of Committees, and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office are involved in ongoing liaison with members and staff of other parliaments and representatives of foreign countries. In 1999 they hosted or met with the following visitors.

March 10	Mr. Marlis Syamsuddin Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia
March 16	Mr. Shigeru Ise Consul General of Japan
March 17	His Excellency Roberto Nigido Ambassador of Italy
March 22	Most Reverend Joseph MacNeil Roman Catholic Archbishop of Edmonton
April 15	His Excellency Billy Modise High Commissioner for South Africa
April 15	Russian Parliamentary Delegation
April 21	Forum for Young Albertans
May 3	His Excellency Dr. M Al-Hussaini Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
May 5	Mr. Kiyoshi Shidara Consul General of Japan
May 12	His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Khandogiy Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine
May 12	Mr. Ian Kydd British Consul General
May 17	His Excellency René Fidèle Rajaonah Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar
May 27	Mr. Michel Dejaegher Consul General of France
June 22	His Excellency Erhan Ögüt Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey
July 2	His Excellency Katsuhisa Uchida Ambassador of Japan
August 24	His Excellency Manuel Pesantes Ambassador of Ecuador
September 27	His Excellency André Jaquet High Commissioner for South Africa
October 14	Mr. Patricio Villanueva Consul General of the Republic of Chile
October 14	His Excellency Walther Lichem Ambassador of the Republic of Austria
October 18	The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, C.C. C.M.M. C.D. Governor General of Canada
November 17	His Excellency Vladimir Kotzy Ambassador of the Czech Republic
November 25	His Excellency Dr. Juergen Poehlmann Ambassador of Germany
December 6	Mr. Byong-Il Kang Consul General of the Republic of Korea

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